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HIS MAJESTY ALBERT I, KING OF THE BELGIANS

Belgium of the Belgians

By

Demetrius C. Boulger

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Belgium of the Belgians

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF BELGIUM; A PRODUCT OF MEDIÆVALISM MOULDED BY MODERN INFLUENCES

THERE is no country in Europe where the old and the new are brought into closer juxtaposition than in Belgium. Perhaps it is due to its compactness, to its manifest limitations in size, that the student seems to find there set out under his eyes for close examination a microcosm of European history—on one side the well-preserved relics, not merely in Art but in social customs, of the Middle Ages, and on the other the fierce activities of this twentieth century. Only eighty years have passed since Belgium came by her own in full sovereign independence; yet behind the Revolution of 1830 lay ten centuries of recorded history. There are dark periods in that record when it looked on the surface as if the nationality that owed its name to Cæsar had expired; but a little research suffices to show that below the surface whatever the ruler's name on the current coin there survived the pride of race which is the surest foundation of independence, and that in the darkest hours of subjugation the cities and the provinces of Belgium knew how to retain, or if lost for brief periods to recover, their civic and constitutional privileges. To those who admire the display of courage and fortitude under difficulties, the tenacity of the Belgians throughout their chequered history should serve as a model of how an arduous fight for all that men hold most dear may

A Microcosm of European History.

be won in the teeth of adversity and against seemingly hopeless odds.

Belgium is divided into Nine Provinces. Each of their names recalls, and indeed represents, the oldest and most famous titles on the roll of European chivalry. They are (1 and 2) Flanders (now divided into East and West to separate the spheres of Ghent and Bruges, rival though, as the poet Ledeganck well called them, "Sister Cities") which is but the countdom created by Charlemagne, oldest of hereditary titles, the holder of which stood first among the Twelve Peers of the ancient Kingdom of France;

The Nine Provinces.

(3) Hainaut, another countdom little junior to its neighbour, and known to every English schoolboy as the home of good Queen Philippa, saviour of the citizens of Calais;

(4) Brabant, a Duchy from the ninth century, whose dukes were long regarded as the mirror of Western chivalry;

(5) Limburg, another duchy, connected with the House of Gueldres, of which the famous Egmont was a scion;

(6) Luxemburg, the countdom of the illustrious blind King of Bohemia, killed at Crécy;

(7) Antwerp, a Marquisate held by the sage Godfrey of Bouillon, Lord and Protector of Jerusalem;

(8) Namur, a countdom once possessed by the Courtenay family, Emperors of the East; and

(9) Liége, the seat of a long line of prince bishops, who held their own for a thousand years among emperors and kings.

These provinces remain as separate entities, each preserving the crest and coat of arms borne by their feudal owners, but are now all merged in the modern constitutional Kingdom of Belgium. Before passing on it may interest the inquiring reader to state that the seven hereditary titles just recapitulated belong by descent to the Emperor of Austria, as Head of the Houses of Hapsburg and Burgundy; but it is the present practice in Belgium to call the heir apparent Duke of Brabant, his

The Duke of Brabant.

brother, the Count of Flanders, and if the Duke of Brabant should chance to have a son in th King's lifetime he is called the Count of Hainaut. Better proof could scarcely be furnished as to Belgian love for antiquity.

Side by side with the feudal dignities of which we have been speaking there sprang up in Belgium another institution that is scarcely less ancient than they are. The civic dignities won by the people themselves are almost as old as those conferred by Emperor and King. In the year 960 cloth markets were recognised by law at Ghent, Courtrai and Ypres; and in 1068 the city of Grammont received the first charter granted by any of the Counts to the people of the towns. This charter established a new law for the citizens, making them secure against the tyranny of Feudal and Clerical Courts. It will be interesting to trace the development of civic liberty in the history of the great cities. For the purpose of this general survey it is only necessary to note that the ancient glories of Belgium are as much civic and communal as noble, feudal and chivalric. It was from Flanders that England borrowed her own civic institutions. The order of Mayor, Sheriffs and Jury, the great City Companies, the social splendours of the Guildhall, the excellent system of apprenticeship, were all based on the Flemish model, and originated in English emulation of Belgian prosperity and enterprise. The connection and resemblance are all the closer because here as in Belgium civic magnificence and independence were regarded as entirely independent of and separate from the State and political power.

The First Charters.

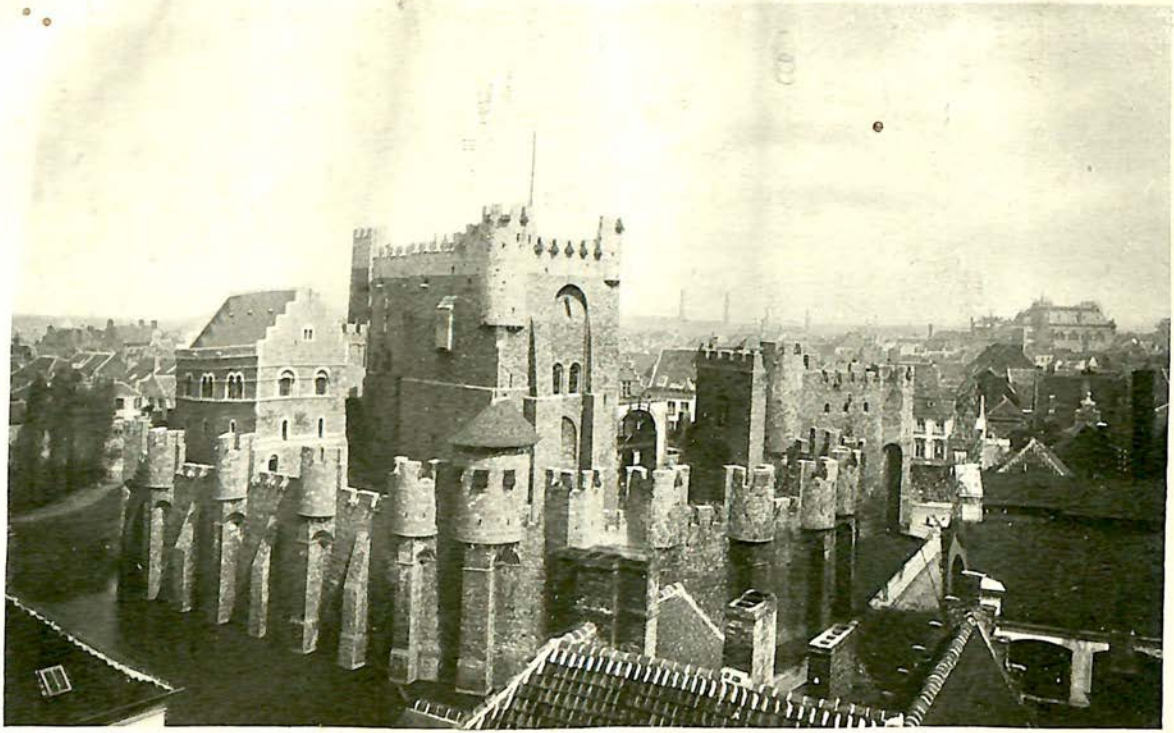
In the fourteenth century James van Artevelde sought to convert the Communes into a solid political confederacy. The attempt was renewed by his son Philip, but they both failed of success. The citizens did not want political influence or to be troubled about high affairs of State. They desired local liberty and freedom to attend to their own business. For

Civic Traditions.

external questions they were content that the Counts of Flanders should have their own way, and they were willing to provide them even generously with subsidies for the purpose. But this was always on the assumption that the civic privileges remained intact, and when Ghent incurred, at the hands of the Emperor Charles V, the humiliation which its insolence fully deserved, the rights and status of the other cities remained undisturbed.

The influence of these civic traditions has not disappeared from Belgian life to-day. The Belgian describes himself by the name of his city rather than by his country, and if he happens to be of Brussels he will even be so precise as to cite the name of his commune. For instance, it is quite usual to hear a person reply, instead of " I am a native of Brussels " (" moi, je suis Bruxellois "), " I am of Scaerbeek " or " Ixelles " (" moi, je suis Scaerbeekois " or " Ixellois "). The explanation of this local pride is to be found in the fact that whereas the Belgian sometimes lost his country he never lost his commune, and that he always found consolation in local liberty for the loss of national independence.

There is no doubt that Belgian life and character were greatly modified by the events of the sixteenth century. It does not seem an exaggeration to say that from the time of the Arteveldes to the abdication of Charles V the Belgian provinces formed the richest state in Europe. When that Emperor was chatting and joking with his rival, Francis I, he boasted not of his Indian argosies but of his Flemish possessions. " I could put your Paris in my Gand," punning on the word " gant " or glove. Belgian prosperity was greatly diminished during the troubled reign of Philip II, but the emigration of the weavers to England and Holland dealt it a ruder and more lasting blow than the executions ordered by the Blood Council. The emigrants not merely impoverished the country they quitted, but they enriched that which they made their new home by bringing to its industry the methods devised by their own skill and experience.



CHÂTEAU DES CONTES, GHENT

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After the sixteenth century, then, Belgian prosperity declined, and the life of the nation passed under a cloud which was not dispelled until the country acquired its independence three centuries later. It declined not merely in itself but by comparison with the increased prosperity of its neighbours. In Bruges and Ghent, once the centres of world-wide activity, grass grew in the stone-flagged streets. Antwerp fared no better, for its trade was strangled by the Dutch who closed the Scheldt, and got the Powers to endorse the closure in a long succession of treaties. Trading ships could not get into or out of Antwerp because the door to the port was shut and barred. Nor had Belgium to struggle only against Dutch jealousy. When the Emperor Charles VI took up the development of his Belgian provinces, and endeavoured to make Ostend the base of a trade with India he roused the apprehensions of England, whose price for assenting to the Pragmatic Sanction in favour of the succession of his daughter Maria Theresa, was the cancelling of the Charter of the Ostend Company. In interesting himself in Colonial matters like that of the Congo the late King Leopold II took up the thread that was dropped in 1731.

Decline in Prosperity.

The self-repression, and even suspended national vitality, to which the Belgians found themselves consigned after the Treaty of Munster served to intensify the feeling that they had to live a life apart from their rulers, and that in the careful preservation of inherited custom they had the sole means of showing that they were still a nation. To the neglect of their foreign rulers were long added the horrors of the wars waged by rival nations on their soil. In the seventy years that closed with the Treaty of Utrecht, scarcely a city escaped pillage once if not twice, many thousands of soldiers had to be fed, the most sanguinary battles of the period were fought in Belgium. War was a curse, all the greater because peace brought no blessing.

Despite the rude trials of this long period of adversity the

Belgians clung to their own way of living, and carried on the national traditions notwithstanding the presence of foreign hosts and indifferent rulers. When Villeroi, in 1695, laid half Brussels in ashes, and its civic life seemed ended with the destruction of the Hotel de Ville and Guild houses on the Grande Place, the citizens, regardless of the international storms sweeping across the country, set themselves to the task of reconstructing what they loved with patience and persistency. Twenty years after the bombardment the Grande Place had resumed its normal appearance; the Austrian rulers, on assuming the government of the country, found the civic life of the capital in full vigour. It took the Austrians imbued with the spirit of absolutism a generation to discover that this subject people, of whose very existence the Imperial Chancery affected to be ignorant, had a Constitution of their own. The Count de Nény, Austrian by service but Irish in blood, reported to his sovereign, "These people have a Constitution," and the English traveller, Shaw, declared the Belgians to be "the freest people on the continent of Europe."

The Old Constitution.

It is necessary to remember these things if we are to understand how it was that the Belgians so easily, and as it were naturally, made for themselves a new constitution and system of government in 1830. They had merely to borrow from the old charters the ordinances that had prescribed the freedom of the people from the times of the Baldwins of Flanders and Wenceslas of Brabant. The Belgian Revolution did not then introduce a new system, it merely revived and nationalised what had been cherished as its ideal by the Belgian people under every form of foreign tyranny. There was greater difficulty in providing for the future than in extracting wisdom from the past.

For after Belgium had achieved her independence she was confronted with the necessity of adapting herself to the conditions of her new life. The old system to which under

foreign tyranny she had clung, had totally disappeared from Western Europe; there remained the problem how would she adapt herself to the new exigencies of an age of mechanical development and social upheaval? It must be recorded that under the influence of her recent emancipation Belgium succumbed to modern influences. Veneration for the past was superseded by the need of providing for the future. An entirely new Belgium came into evidence. The intense conservatism of the people was modified by the struggle of life, now that it had become a matter of national existence. One common trait connected the men of the two epochs —the capacity for work. At all periods of his history the Belgian has been a hard worker—"Give me a Walloon for honest work," said a German manufacturer of Gladbach only the other day to the present writer. Before 1830 the Belgian worked under adverse circumstances, after that year he worked with hope. In the wake of work has come unexampled prosperity, and that explains why the Belgian character and mode of life have been modified of recent years.

A Nation of Workers.

When its industry was strangled in the sixteenth century Belgium became essentially an agricultural country, and this remained the state of things until long after Waterloo. To the Dutch King William I belongs, indeed, the credit of having initiated the industrial activity which is the characteristic feature of modern Belgium by associating himself with the Englishman, John Cockerill, in founding the great enterprise at Seraing. But it was not until after the substitution of national for Dutch rule that the coal mines of Hainaut and Liége were exploited to any extent. The introduction of railways in 1835 rendered a supply of home-produced coal necessary, and about the same time that the Hainaut coal-fields were brought into full activity the extensive iron-field between the Sambre and Meuse was discovered and turned to profit. The foundries of Charleroi and Seraing were thus

provided with all they needed for immediate activity and future development.

The achievement of national independence was thus followed by a great outburst of industrial and mechanical activity which enormously increased the wealth of the country. The provinces continued the intensive agricultural production which had for centuries kept the people from starving when their land was overrun by foreign soldiers. But the towns, and especially those in the valleys of the Meuse and the Sambre, emerged from a provincial stage and became the head centres of the new national activity. The aspect of the country completely changed. Its rural character was modified and encroached upon by the excavation of mines and quarries, and the erection of factories. Those who knew Belgium at the time of the French Revolution, when much of it was virgin forest, would not have known it fifty years later when the State had executed the plan of main railways devised in 1835.

The change was not confined to the external aspect of the country. Increased prosperity altered the character of the people. The necessity of thinking out and carrying out a national policy introduced new views and stimulated larger ideas. Misfortune had made the Belgian secretive and reserved. The centuries of foreign subjection had taught him the wisdom of caution, and those who are always cautious must in the end become timid. As a nation the Belgians of the old days sought to efface themselves, and they succeeded in their object so well that no foreign observer, after the close of the Burgundian period, can be found who attempted to diagnose their character or to treat them seriously as a people differing in essential points from all their neighbours. A few writers during the Austrian occupation refer to "the good Belgians" as "humble, meek, and subservient." That was before the Brabant revolution which temporarily ended Austria's domination, but it would have been far nearer the truth to

National Caution.

have selected as their chief national characteristic long-suffering pride. They might be imagined as apostrophising Fate in words like these—"Do your worst! You cannot make us suffer more than we have suffered; yet we survive!"

As great a change as has passed over the face of the country has modified and moulded anew the Belgian character. Prosperity, the remarkable national success, the feeling of independence have dispelled the timidity that used to colour all the views of the Belgians. Those who describe them as loth to accept responsibility and fearful of their capacity to retain what they have won are thinking of men of the last generation and not of the present day. Quiet but none the less resolute self-confidence is the basis of public opinion among Walloons and Flemings alike. The qualities that enable nations to bear adversity are not always those most suited for prosperity. Self-restraint, the suppression of natural emotion when the withholding influence disappears, may easily become arrogance, and the desire to browbeat those identified with former oppression may prove irresistible. But in the case of Belgium two circumstances have counteracted this natural revulsion from one extreme to the other. There is the limitation to Belgian sovereignty in the imposition of permanent neutrality by the Treaty Powers which seemed to carry with it the assumption that Europe had recognised Belgium to a certain extent "on probation." It is scarcely necessary to say that that phase of her national life passed away long ago. Belgium can more or less work out her own destiny.

Other Characteristics.

The second restraining circumstance is of a material order. To meet the increased financial burden imposed by the task of preserving what has been won under such difficult and perilous conditions attention has had to be concentrated on the development of the country's resources. All the greater effort has been needed because its population has increased at a greater rate than in any other part of Europe. With

so much at stake, with such constant and continuous demands on the administrative and intellectual faculties of the nation, it is not surprising that the Belgian character has become one of an essentially practical order, and that it recognises only the proved facts of the day.

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF BRUSSELS

Nobilibus Bruxella viris is the attribute assigned to the city of Brussels in the well-known monkish quatrain that summarises the pretensions of the chief Belgian cities. Seven noble houses alone were in the first four centuries of its civic existence, allowed to build residences of stone within the walls; the seven gates were entrusted to the guard of a scion of each family, and although the seven *lignages* have disappeared from the livre d'or of Belgian nobility there is not a family of distinction to-day in Brabant that omits to trace its descent from one or other of those seven[1] Brussels *gentes*. The chronicler knew his subject when he declared that Brussels was proudest of its noblemen.

Brussels Noble Families.

The early history of Brussels is obscure, and it is not till we come to the construction of the first wall in the year 1000 that we touch firm ground. Yet the place is mentioned in cartularies of the tenth century, and popular belief is far astray if the building which gave it its name (Brock—sele, *i.e.*, dwelling on the border of a marsh) was not there a hundred years earlier. The dwelling seems to have been the residence of the clergy attached to the Church of St. Géry, erected on an islet in the river Senne. Here about the year 980 Charles, brother of King Lothaire of France, and great grandson of Charlemagne, who had been raised to the Duchy of Lower Lorraine by the Emperor of Germany, Otho II, built a castle, in close proximity to the Church of St. Géry. To this church

Origin of name Brussels.

[1] The seven *lignages* were Leeuw, Weert, Hughe, Roelofs, Caudenberg, Steenweg, and Rodenbuke. The princely family of De Ligne alone reveals in its name the origin from which it sprang.

he removed from Alost the body of Ste Gudule (niece of the first Pepin distinguished as "of Landen") and at a later date we shall see how her name became attached to the collegiate church of Brussels. Charles did not reign long, for on attempting to make good his claim to the French throne on his brother's death he was captured by Hugh Capet and died in prison at Orleans. One of his daughters named Gerberga had married Lambert, Count of Louvain, who, on his father-in-law's departure appropriated Brussels. This circumstance explains why Louvain and not Brussels was the first capital of Brabant, and why modern Brussels is not a separate bishopric.

Lambert is an important personage in Brussels history for he was the first to surround the town with a wall. This *enceinte* was about two and a half miles in length (4,000 metres), and its eastern side ran along the crest of the hill named Michael's Mount, which at the southern extremity was specifically called the Caudenberg, or *frigidus mons* (the cold mount). On this side then the wall followed part of the modern rue Royale and the Caudenberg stood on the Place Royale. Lambert was killed at the battle of Florennes, but during the indescribable confusion that followed in the affairs of the two Lorraine duchies his sons Henry and Lambert II succeeded in retaining possession of both Louvain and Brussels. In the year 1081 Henry of Louvain was a signatory of the famous Peace Tribunal established at Liége. In his time also the Church, dedicated to St. Michael alone in the first place, was commenced on its present site half way up the slope of the mountain at Brussels, and the relics of Ste Gudule were removed there from the Church of St. Géry. It was after this incident that the name Ste Gudule gradually displaced that of St. Michael, but in all formal documents both names are preserved to the present day.

The First Wall.

The construction of the wall and the commencement of the Collegiate Church, which has been for so many centuries

the glory of Brussels, marked its inclusion among the cities created by the industrial development of the peoples of Flanders and Brabant. If the Count of Louvain gave the order for surrounding Brussels with a wall to be pierced by seven gates, it was the citizens themselves who built it for their own ends. Protection from the raids of robber knights, and even from the attack of their own Counts was what they sought, and thus in the first fortification of Brussels no provision of a residence for the Count was made. The seven aristocratic families secured the privilege to build their houses in stone—for the others wood or wattle was to suffice—and each assumed the custody of the gate nearest to its abode.

Ste Gudule.

There is not much information to be found on the subject of civic life in Brussels in the eleventh century, but it may reasonably be assumed that the provision of security encouraged the weaving industry which furnished the basis of public prosperity in Brabant as well as Flanders. An incident of the year 1101, which is still preserved in public memory by at least a partial observance, throws some light on the state of society in that day. In 1096 many Brussels knights and citizens left to follow the banner of Godfrey of Bouillon for the First Crusade. More than four years passed without news, and it was concluded that all had perished in the distant expedition. One afternoon—19th January, 1101—the watchman at one of the gates announced the approach of a small band to the sound of trumpets. It was soon discovered that they were the returned Crusaders, or at least such of them as survived, and their wives and womenfolk rushed through the gates to meet and welcome them. A great banquet was provided in honour of those who were thought to be lost but had returned in safety, and it was declared that the husbands remained so long over their feast and their wine that their wives seized them and carried them off on their shoulders to bed. This event is still known as the Vrouwkins Avondt or la Veillée

The Ladies' Watch.

des Dames (the ladies' watch), and in some parts of Brussels on each 19th of January women may still be seen carrying men about on their backs.

In the year 1140 Godfrey the Bearded, Count of Louvain and Brussels, was raised to the rank of Duke of Lower Lorraine, but gradually the different Counts (*e.g.*, Luxemburg, Limburg, Namur) shook off their dependence on the Duke who became merely a feudatory of the Empire on the same level as the others. It was in these circumstances that the name Brabant superseded that of Lower Lorraine. The diminution in the extent and significance of the Duke's authority rendered the goodwill of the citizens of Brussels more important to him. Thus it gave the citizens their chance of establishing their own position in an age when there was no intermediate grade between the noble and the serf. The Duke needed the subsidies of the towns; the communes granted them in return for rights and immunities. In 1235 Louvain and Brussels received their first Charters of enfranchisement. They were exempted from the operation of the feudal law by the Duke's assent to laws of their own making.

Sheriffs and Jurors.

Brussels acquired the right of choosing seven sheriffs and thirteen jurors, subject, indeed, to the Duke's approbation, but this formality did not affect the main point which was that the citizens were to be tried not in the Duke's court but in their own. Once the immunity of the citizen from the feudal law was secured there was not much difficulty in making each grant of money an occasion for strengthening the terms or enlarging the conditions of the original charter.

In the midst of these discussions came the reign of John I, Duke of Brabant, one of the most splendid figures of the feudal ages. He was poet, songster and knight-errant as well as a great general and a wise and considerate ruler. His court was the resort of the troubadours, and he and his sister Mary, afterwards Queen of France, took part in the competitions of the minstrels. As knight-errant he proved the

victor in seventy tournays, the most memorable of which was when he slew his sister's calumniator in the lists at Paris on the occasion of his demanding on her behalf the "judgment of God." His claims to generalship were established at the battle of Woeringen on the Rhine, the most famous victory in the annals of Brabant. His wars proved so costly that he had twice to ask the citizens of Brussels and Louvain to aid him with the twentieth of their real property. In return for this "free gift," as it was termed, the cities received further privileges including a definite penal code which they had authority to enforce on all persons except "monks, nuns, priests, Lombards and Jews," who were to remain subject to the Duke alone. He also bound himself to nominate no amman or other ducal representative in the towns as the reward for money lent to himself, and finally he agreed that the evidence of his officers and servants was not to be regarded as of greater weight than that of their accusers. It was in 1292 that John the Victorious granted these privileges; two years later he was mortally wounded in a tournay in Champagne, and he was buried in the Church of the Franciscans at Brussels, his favourite city.

Battle of Woeringen.

The privileges enumerated were won and retained not by the mass of the citizens, but by the privileged members of the aristocratic or plutocratic families who alone provided the sheriffs and jurors. From the disaffection that revealed itself during the reigns of John's two immediate successors it seems plain that they abused their power, and that those born outside the charmed circle found oligarchical tyranny worse than that of the feudal law. Duke John II supported the privileged classes at Brussels and Louvain, and in a battle in the Vilvorde meadows he overthrew the "white hoods," as the artisans called themselves. But in the end the citizens carried their way by closing their coffers, and in the year 1312 the Duke was compelled to sign the famous Charter of Cortenberg,

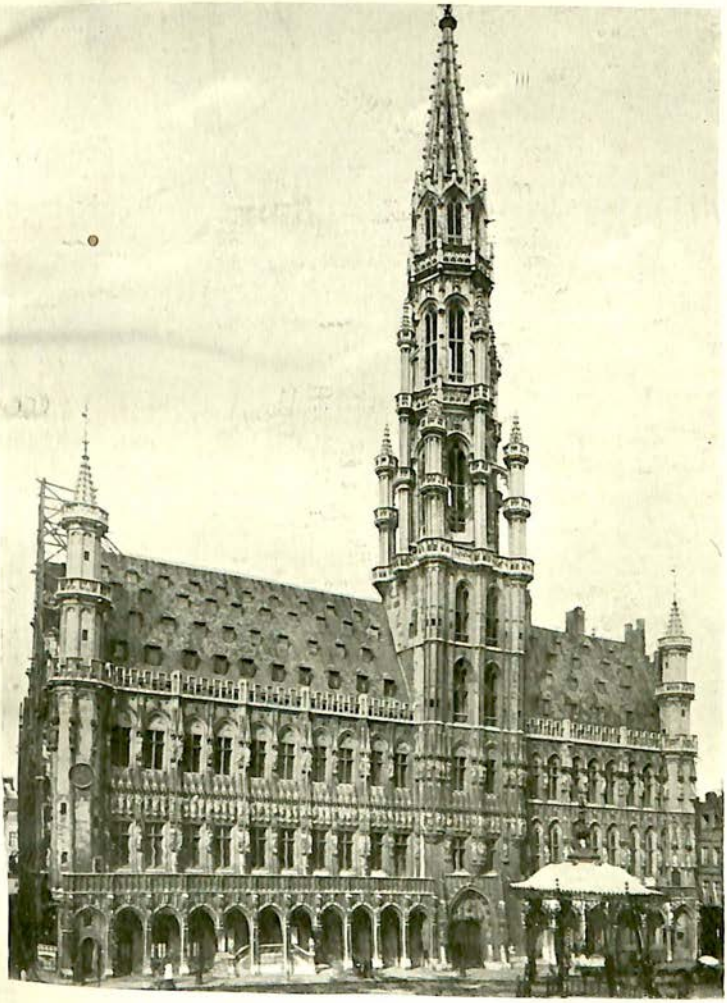
The White Hoods.

which confirmed and extended the privileges his father had granted twenty years before. This Charter was the real basis of all Belgian liberties. John II died soon afterwards, and like his father was buried in Brussels, where his tomb and that of his wife Margaret of York may be seen at the present day in Ste Gudule.

His son and successor John III was allied, somewhat reluctantly, by treaty with our Edward III, who appointed him his "lieutenant-captain" for the kingdom of France, but his days were saddened by the deaths of his sons and the ravages of the "black death." He died in 1355, leaving his possessions to his daughter Joan and her husband Wenceslas of Luxemburg, son of the blind king of Bohemia who fell at Crécy. At a remarkable assembly on the eve of his death the representatives of thirty-eight towns of Brabant swore before Duke John to uphold the integrity of the dominions he bequeathed to his daughter and her husband. A few days later, January, 1356, Wenceslas and his wife made their "joyous entry" into Louvain, and it was decreed that this form of inauguration carried with it the ratification by each successive duke of the Charter of Cortenberg.

The First Joyous Entry.

During the reigns of the three Johns Brussels had been growing in importance. Several of the most important churches that have come down to the present day were then commenced. Ste Gudule, the Sablon and La Chapelle may be named. John III built on the Caudenberg the castle residence which ultimately developed into the famous Palace of the Netherlands. His friend and comrade in arms, William de Duvenvoorde, was permitted to build a stone house near his prince's, and this became eventually the Palace of Nassau and the home of William the Silent. The famous Hotel de Ville already flanked the Grande Place, and the guilds and metiers fixed their quarters in the adjacent houses although at first they were built only in wood. At the same time that Brussels was assuming a more imposing appearance by the



HOTEL DE VILLE, BRUSSELS

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

erection of these important buildings, its inhabitants were greatly increased by the advent of many persons who wished to exchange the insecurity of the open country for the security of a walled town. Brussels was also the centre of a prosperous weaving industry. At this period the population may be reasonably computed at 50,000 persons.

Remembering that people required a great deal more space for their houses in those days, and that some cultivation had to be allowed for within the walls, it is not surprising that the original *enceinte* of the year 1000 seemed too small, and that space within it had grown too cramped. Almost the first act of Wenceslas and Joan, so far as Brussels was concerned, was to decide on the construction of a new and enlarged wall which was still to be pierced, however, by the seven historic gates. This *enceinte* embraced a much larger extent of the crest of Michael's Mount than its predecessor, and the three gates of Louvain, Namur and Hal, occupied the very positions which their names at least apply to at the present time, although that of Hal alone remains as a structure. Indeed, the wall of Wenceslas existed more or less completely down to the time of Waterloo. The work begun by Wenceslas in 1357 was not completed till the close of the reign, as the year 1381 carved in the wall of the Hal tower shows.

The Second Wall.

There was a curious but strictly enforced rule passed at this time with regard to entrance and exit to and from the city. The gates were open from 3.30 in the morning to nine at night in the summer, and from six to five in winter. During the times of closure the gates were opened for no one, high or low, and the belated citizen had to pass the night as well as he could on the other side of the moat. It is said in one of the chronicles that these unlucky persons, in addition to being kept out of their beds, had to put up with the jeers and jests of luckier citizens who witnessed their discomfiture from the walls.

The City Gates.

It was just before the commencement of the second *enceinte*

that one of the most striking episodes in Brussels history took place. On the death of John III of Brabant, Louis de Male, Count of Flanders, put forward his claim to the possession of Brussels in right of his wife the Lady Margaret, Joan's younger sister. He promptly marched with a large army to seize the city, and Joan, in the absence of her husband Wenceslas, went out to meet him in the fields of Scheut, near Brussels. The battle, fought on 17th August, 1356, proved a victory for Flanders, but Joan escaped to join her husband on the Meuse. Then for the first and only time in history a Flemish garrison was installed in the gay proud city of Brabant.

The occupation lasted only two months, and Brussels was recovered by an act of heroism on the part of a scion of one of the seven *lignages*. Everard T'Serclaes was a knight attached to the cause of Wenceslas, and he conceived the idea that it would be easy to recover the city by a *coup de main*. He collected a small band of resolute men from among those who had fled with Joan, and scaling the wall in the night of 24th October, 1356, made straight for the Hotel de Ville. Here they slew the guard, cut down the Flemish standard and proceeded to rouse the citizens to the cry of "Brabant for the Great Duke!" The Flemish garrison was exterminated, and the authority of Wenceslas was restored. Everard T'Serclaes became the hero of Brussels and in a sense still remains so. Thirty-three years later he was surprised on the high road by an enemy who caused his tongue to be cut out and a foot to be cut off. He was conveyed into Brussels to die. The closing scene took place in a house known as the Étoile beside the Hotel de Ville. This house, built of wood, was demolished in the sixteenth century to allow of a fresh street being pierced into the square; and some years ago a recumbent statue of Everard T'Serclaes was placed within a niche to remind the modern age of his achievement.

Everard T'Serclaes.

The later years of the reign of Wenceslas witnessed serious troubles at Louvain, where the trades rose against the patricians. In the end the Duke had the opportunity of establishing his own power through the fatal rivalry of the two parties, but the prosperity of Louvain declined. It ceased to be regarded as the capital of Brabant, and its pre-eminence was transferred to Brussels. Wenceslas, although he extended the charters and swore more than once to respect them in return for subsidies, did not love the cities. He built a strong moated castle at Vilvorde, which was as much a State prison as a house, and he lived generally at Luxemburg. He died at that place and was buried at the famous abbey of Orval. His widow reigned alone for twenty-three years after his death, dying herself in 1406.

The fifteenth century saw a great advance in the fortunes of Brussels. Somebody described it in the fourteenth century as "poor, sad, and sombre." This was at a moment when the "black death" was ravaging the country. The establishment of the House of Burgundy on the throne of the Netherlands introduced a brighter future. It was not, indeed, until the accession of the third Burgundian ruler, Philip the Good, that any definite change could be noted in the ruler's treatment of Brussels. He was the ruler of Brabant as well as Flanders, having made his "joyous entry" into Brussels in October, 1430. That occurrence was the ratification by the new dynasty not merely of the Charters already cited, but of new privileges gained in the interval after Duchess Joan's death. Of these the most important was the division of the forty metiers into the nine Nations that still exist.

The House of Burgundy.

It was in or about the year 1450 that Philip the Good transferred his residence from Ghent to Brussels. He caused the castle of Caudenberg to be enlarged and embellished so that it might form a suitable royal residence. He enclosed a park and garden on adjacent ground, and as a proof that he wished

Brussels to be regarded as the capital of his dynasty he removed to it from Bruges, which had witnessed its foundation, the archives and treasury of his famous order of the Golden Fleece. The famous Hotel de Ville was completed and the gilt figure of St. Michael overcoming the Devil (the masterpiece of Martin van Rode) was placed as a vane on its lofty tower where it remained until damaged and broken in 1863 during a great storm. The present figure is as near as may be a facsimile by the artist Heims. The city seal of Brussels bears the figure of St. Michael as that of its tutelary saint.

The Hotel de Ville.

Charles the Bold undid as much as he could of the concessions made to the communes, but his military failures led to the cities once more becoming masters of the situation, and after his death his daughter Mary had to restore all that he had taken away. It was at this time that the Burgomasters of Brussels, who have numbered in their ranks some of the most remarkable men of the Netherlands, began to figure prominently before the public. In Flanders the communes were always impersonal, except for the brief passage across the public stage of the Van Arteveldes, but in Brussels the personal element was more obtrusive. The power and authority of the commune became concentrated in the person of the burgomaster, the elected head of the citizens, while the Duke's amman was a mere cypher, and at last the sovereign did not think it worth his while to nominate one.

The Burgomasters.

The first of these burgomasters to leave a name in history was the Chevalier de Locquenghien, who in 1477 introduced a scheme for improving the water supply of the city. At that time the bulk of the water required was obtained from the Senne, comparatively speaking an insignificant stream. We know nothing of the system of sanitation enforced in cities in those days but an adequate supply of water was

essential both in peace and war. The growth of the population called for an increased supply. Locquenghien obtained it by the construction of a canal from the Ruppel and the Scheldt to the Senne. This canal, known as the Willebroeck, provided Brussels with the necessary supply and also with a fresh means of communication with Antwerp and the outer world. It was by the Willebroeck Canal that the Prince of Orange made his triumphal entry into Brussels at the invitation of the States of Brabant on 23rd September, 1577. The medal struck to commemorate the event bears the name of Locquenghien in grateful tribute from the people who benefited by his work.

The Willebroeck Canal.

Brussels owed much to Charles V. He added to the Palace, which had been little touched since the time of Philip the Good. It was he who built the fine Cour des Bailles, the courtyard surrounded by a stone wall crowned with iron railings elaborately worked and richly gilded. This court occupied the space now allotted to the Place Royale. Some years later he had the satisfaction of seeing before the close of his reign the completion of the beautiful chapel. It was considered at that time that the Palace of the Netherlands was the finest royal residence in Europe.

Having mentioned Charles V, there is one incident of his last days in Brussels that may be referred to. After his abdication he resided for twelve months in a small house in the park attached to the Palace. The house seems to have been situated at the extremity of the park nearest the Porte de Louvain. The reason for the Emperor's deferring his departure for the monastery of St. Juste, in Estramadura, is not clear, but there is no doubt that he was greatly crippled with gout and rheumatism. While waiting here he received a visit from Admiral Coligny, who brought him a letter from the King of France. Charles took it in his hand, but owing to the cramp was unable to break the seals. Coligny had to

An Interesting Conversation.

cut them with his dagger. Then they fell to talking of wars and generalship, and Coligny did the part of listener. Charles declared that his brother and he were the two greatest generals because they had seen more wars than anyone else. Then came Alva; Coligny himself was too young as yet to aspire to that eminence. It must have been an interesting conversation, but there were no reporters present, and we only get the fragments.

We come now to the stormy period of Alva and the Spanish Inquisition. Brussels was the scene of all the introductory incidents. It saw the presentation of the famous Petition to Margaret of Parma, the formation of the Beggars' League in the Culemburg Hotel, and then the flight of William of Orange on the approach of Alva, and the arrest of Egmont who would not flee. Horn was then enticed to Brussels and placed in the same prison as his friend, first at Ghent and finally in Brussels. This was only a few days before their execution together on the Grand' Place. The Maison du Roi, which was built about 1520, was selected as their final place of detention, because it looked on the Grand' Place, the appointed scene of execution. The Maison du Roi had been named in the first place the Broodhuis because the price of bread was declared there, but its name had been changed on the establishment in the building of some of the Royal Courts of Justice. On 1st June, 1568, Alva caused eighteen Belgian nobles to be executed, the next day four more shared their fate. There was a lull of two days, but Egmont and Horn had been brought from Ghent. On the 5th they were executed on the same spot. The scene has been described by Motley, who, however, omits to say that the French Ambassador exclaimed on seeing Egmont's head fall in the dust—"My master's army has been reinforced by 10,000 men." Another and little known instance of the callousness of Alva was furnished in the year following these executions, when a great tournay and jousting festival was held on the Grand' Place. The contemporary

Egmont and Horn.

account does not reveal any popular interest in the affair. The citizens of Brussels had for the time at least been cured of their passion for amusement. It was on the Grand' Place, too, that five years later Requescens, the new Governor-General, proclaimed the Pope's Pardon and the King of Spain's amnesty to the people of the Netherlands, or rather to such of them as remained true to their religion.

A very different scene was enacted on the Grand' Place a little later on. Brussels joined the Pacification of Ghent, and the ruling power was vested in the old States and not in a Spanish Governor. This was the time when William the Silent paid the visit to Brussels already referred to. He might have given life to the confederacy in Belgium, but unfortunately the nobles of Brabant were jealous of him and sent to Austria for the Archduke Mathias to come as Governor-General of the Netherlands. Mathias came and took the oath to the States in 1578 on the Grand' Place, and at the same time William was installed in the inferior office of Governor of Brabant. William the Silent had also rendered himself unpopular in Belgium by leaving the Catholic Church and proclaiming himself a Lutheran. The hollowness of these appointments was exposed a fortnight later when Don John of Austria routed the States' army at Gembloux.

The Grand' Place.

The last and most curious incident of this period, that had the Grand' Place as its scene, was the attempt of Philippe d'Egmont, in June, 1579, to recover Brussels for the Spaniards. Accompanied by a few hundred horsemen, detached from the army with which Parma was besieging Maestricht, young Egmont, wishing to signalise his loyalty by some striking deed, made a raid on Brussels. Forcing one of the gates he and his band made straight for the Grand' Place. But the town levies rose to the occasion. They also hastened to the scene and, blocking the seven streets, then and still leading to the Square, the invaders found themselves caught in a trap.

After listening to the reproaches poured upon him for forgetting his father's death, Philippe d'Egmont was allowed to retire, having lost but few of his men. It was not till 1585 that Parma, busily occupied at Ghent, attacked and captured Brussels. Curiously enough the records mention that a Scottish regiment took part in the defence without giving any particulars of its name or composition.

A brighter future dawned for Brussels in the year 1599 when the Archduke Albert of Austria and the Infanta Isabella of Spain made their "joyous entry" into the city. It was inaugurated with what was deemed a happy omen. From the time of the Crusades crossbowmanship had been one of the popular games of Belgium, and the new chief was expected to draw a bolt at a flying bird. Mary of Burgundy had sped a shaft with unerring aim. So had Philip the Fair and his son Charles V. Isabella was among the fortunate who brought down the quarry, from which a bright future was augured. Even to the present day the guilds of the Crossbowmen of Hainaut and Brabant are important and prosperous. How important they were in the Middle Ages may be inferred from the fact that the Guild of the Crossbowmen founded in 1304 the Church of Notre-Dame des Victoires which exists to-day under the name of the Sablon.

The Crossbowmen.

On the whole Brussels flourished during the seventeenth century, at least until it approached its close. Among the greatest of its civic chiefs was Frederic le Marselaer, Baron de Perch, who was seven times Burgomaster in the first quarter of that century and whose lineaments will be known as long as the canvas of Vandyke endures. The same artist's portrait of the worthy Burgomaster's wife, Margaret de Baronaige, also exists, but his group of twenty-three members of the council presided over by Marselaer, which was one of the ornaments of the Hotel de Ville, was destroyed when Villeroi bombarded Brussels in 1695.

The Brussels of which we are speaking had not changed

since the Middle Ages and probably reached its prime about the year 1650, when Condé, sulking like Achilles in his tent during the Fronde, took shelter there from Richelieu. We have a contemporary description of the city from the pen of a French officer, Colonel Duplessis l'Ecuyer, who was in his suite, that will admit of being quoted :—

A Description of Brussels.

"Brussels is one of the finest, largest, and best situated cities not only of Brabant but of the whole of Europe. The old quarters which have an aspect so singularly picturesque with their sloping and tortuous streets, the fine hotels of darkened stone sculptured in the Spanish fashion, and the magnificence of the Place of the Hotel de Ville, are buried behind an *enceinte* of walls pierced by eight lofty gates flanked with one hundred and twenty-seven round towers at almost equal distance from each other like the balls of a crown. At a distance of less than a mile commenced the forest of Soignes with great numbers of stags, red and roe deer, that were hunted on horseback even under the ramparts of the town. On the promenade of the Court there circulated in a long file ceaselessly during fashionable hours five or six hundred carriages, the servants in showy liveries. In the numerous churches the music was renowned. Under the windows of the Palace stretched the park open all the year to respectable people and twice a year to the public, a park filled with trees of rare essences and the most delicious flowers so artistically disposed and so refreshing to the eyes that M. de la Serre declared on leaving that if he had seen there an apple tree he would assuredly have taken it for an earthly Paradise."

This very pretty picture drawn by a Frenchman was sadly interfered with by one of his countrymen some forty years later. Marshal Villeroi appeared on the heights of Anderlecht with an army of 60,000 men in August, 1695, and forthwith proceeded to bombard the city with red-hot bullets. His object was

Bombardment of Brussels.

to compel William III to abandon the siege of Namur, which was on the point of surrender. Villeroi carried on the bombardment for forty-eight hours—13-15th August—and during this time an enormous amount of damage was caused. Sixteen old and interesting churches, all the ancient buildings on the Grand' Place, with the exception of the Hotel de Ville tower, and 4,000 houses were laid in ruins. Brussels did not begin to rise from its ashes until after the end of the War of the Spanish Succession. When its citizens did take heart to rebuild, the old Mint was replaced by the first Theatre of " la Monnaie."

In 1731 Brussels again suffered heavily from fire, when the famous Palace of the Netherlands was destroyed through the carelessness of some cooks preparing sweetmeats. The fire continued for two days, the Archduchess Marie Christine barely escaped with her life, and many of Rubens' masterpieces perished in the flames. No attempt was made to restore this palace, and for the rest of the period of Austrian rule the residence of the Governor-General was fixed in the old Nassau Palace. Villeroi's bombardment does not stand alone. Marshal Saxe fired on the city in February, 1746, but more considerate than his predecessor he aimed at the wall and not at the public buildings. After this occurrence Brussels remained in the possession of the French for three years and received two visits from Louis XV, who resided in the palace of the Duke d'Arenberg, of which Egmont had built the first portion in 1548.

Palace Destroyed.

Two further incidents may be referred to in concluding this chronicle. After the treaty of Utrecht the Netherlands passed to Austria, and Prince Eugene was appointed Governor-General. Unfortunately for Belgium he was too much employed with his work as generalissimo to take up personal charge, and he appointed as his nominee the Marquis de Prié. De Prié set himself to the task of establishing a rigid autocracy, and he came into collision with the civic authorities

THE PULPIT OF STE. GUDULE, BRUSSELS

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

who strove to uphold their charters and constitution. The champion of the city was Francis Anneessens, one of the syndics, and he set the example in refusing to take the oath until the old constitutional rights had been confirmed. De Prié arrested Anneessens and three of his brother syndics. They were put on their trial and in a summary manner Anneessens was sentenced to death and the others to banishment. The execution took place on the Grand' Place on 19th September, 1719, and through petty spite De Prié refused his victim Christian burial, but his remains were collected by his friends and admirers and given burial in a secret but secure grave of the Church of La Chapelle.

A Famous Citizen.

The later Austrian governors were more considerate in their dealings with the Belgian people, and Prince Charles of Lorraine, who represented the Empress Maria Theresa for forty years at Brussels, was one of the most popular rulers the Belgians ever had. It was he who planted the avenues of lime trees which still adorn the upper boulevards of the city.

Charles of Lorraine.

During the Brabant revolution of 1789 Brussels was captured, as the saying went, "by its own citizens." There was, however, very little fighting and less bloodshed. It is said that 60,000 shots were fired and no one was killed, for "those who knew how to shoot did not want to kill, and those who wished to kill did not know how to shoot." The old capital on the slope and summit of Michael's Mount has held its own in the struggle for existence among great European cities during the eight centuries that have elapsed since a monkish chronicler called it "the delice and glory of Brabant."

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF ANTWERP

"THE records of Antwerp are meagre in comparison with those of the other cities, but as its burning by the Norman pirates in the year 836 is an historical fact, it must then have existed at the least for a century or more. In the Frank period a castle named Andhunerbo is marked on the site, and this brings us to the explanation of its name. The castle was built here to protect the approach by the Scheldt, and to prevent robbery either by foreign plunderers, or by foreign traders introducing goods without paying toll to the sovereign of the land. The general European punishment for theft in those days was to cut off the thief's right hand. It is still the practice in uncivilised Africa and in Afghanistan. On the Scheldt the infliction of the penalty had a sequel. The cut off hands were thrown into the river, hence the origin of the name—Andhunerbo in mediæval Latin or Antwerpen in Flemish, *i.e.*, the place of hand-throwing. On the arms of the city to this day appear the Castle and two severed hands.

Meaning of Name Antwerp.

A suggestion has been made, and naturally Motley, who rather lays himself out for ponderous joking at everything mediæval and feudal, favours it, that the name Antwerp is nothing more than "an t' werf" (in Flemish, "on the wharf"). It is rather curious that so skilful a compiler of facts should overlook the point that this really fantastic etymology does not explain the origin of the older name of Andhunerbo which can only have one meaning. Besides, Antwerp was not a place of trade until a much later period. It was a castle guarding an approach to the country by a river, and proof of this is furnished by the fact that the

Emperor Otho on creating the fief made it a Marquisate—that is to say, a frontier countdom. Among the holders of this title the most famous was Godfrey of Bouillon, but if a herald were to recite the full titles and dignities of the Head of the House of Hapsburg there would appear among them that of Marquis of Antwerp.

The Antwerp Marquisate.

The commercial importance of Antwerp dated from the beginning of the decline of Bruges through the silting up of the Zwyn. It must be remembered that the approach of this calamity was visible half a century before it became complete, and the desertion of Bruges by traders was gradual. The patronage of the Burgundian Court also staved off the blow till the last possible moment. But none the less the commercial importance of Antwerp was well established in the earlier half of the fifteenth century. In the year 1450 the Antwerp records show that the Place de Meir was paved with stone for the first time. This was the year also when the famous Cathedral, which was commenced a hundred years before, was brought practically to completion. In 1490 the foreign merchant Guilds or Nations transferred their headquarters from Bruges to Antwerp which at once became the principal centre of trade for the whole of the Netherlands. Its position was far superior in every way to that of Bruges. Seated on a tidal river, navigable by the largest ships, it was most advantageously placed for communication by various waterways with the central and eastern provinces of Belgium.

The period of Antwerp's greatest splendour was between the years 1550 and 1560, when it contained the houses of not fewer than a thousand foreign merchants. These houses were divided among six nations, viz., the Spaniards, the Danes and the Hansa together, the Italians, the English, the Portuguese and the Germans. In 1560 more business was done in one month at Antwerp than in two years at Venice, although that city

Antwerp's Prime.

was still one of the chief places of trade in the world. Every day nearly 500 vessels entered and left the great port on the Scheldt, and two thousand waggons entered the city every week from France or Germany. Between 1550 and 1577 the total of the population fluctuated between one hundred and fifty and two hundred and fifty thousand persons. During this period of her greatest splendour Antwerp acquired her most famous buildings after her churches. The Hotel de Ville, the Bourse (burnt down in 1858 and rebuilt), the Vieille Boucherie, the Musée Plantin all date from this epoch.

Bruges fell by the work of nature; Antwerp declined by the act of man. Antwerp has no reason to love the names of Spain and Alva. In 1567 Alva placed a Spanish garrison in Antwerp, and his first task was to build a citadel with the money of its citizens. Walls and fortified gates had always been the chief demand of the cities; the construction of a Castle or Citadel in the interior of the city had always been the first step in subjecting it to unrestrained autocratic power. Antwerp had escaped the troubles of the feudal period. Her day of trouble had arrived. The bastions of Alva's citadel were so solid that it took the French siege artillery three weeks to destroy part of them in 1832.

The Citadel.

Beyond providing the means of its downfall, Antwerp did not suffer at the hands of Alva. The great blow was dealt by the mutinous Spanish garrison which, having long arrears of pay to receive, decided to repay itself by sacking the city over which it was supposed to keep guard. The Spanish Fury, as it was called, raged through three days of the month of November, 1576. More than six thousand men, women and children were butchered, eight hundred houses were destroyed by fire, and damage was done to the extent of two millions of our present money. That was the direct loss, the indirect was greater, for a considerable number of the citizens at once took refuge in England. The next blow that fell on Antwerp was the treacherous attempt of Anjou

to seize the city in 1583, but the French Fury, as it was called, unlike the Spanish, ended in the triumph of the citizens.

It was Parma, the greatest of the Spanish leaders, who dealt Antwerp its *coup de grâce*. In 1584 he began its siege in a deliberate fashion by cutting off its communications. The city was held by a strong garrison under Marnix de Ste Aldegonde, but so close was the investment that by the summer of 1585 the besieged were on the verge of starvation and Marnix was obliged to capitulate. The victory was stained by no act of cruelty, but in the eighteen months covered by the siege, the population of Antwerp fell from 85,000 to 55,000 persons. This decline was, of course, largely due to the voluntary emigration of those who elected to follow the new religion.

A Famous Siege.

Here, again, as is so often the case in human affairs, the indirect consequences were more serious than the direct loss. Antwerp passed finally under the rule of Spain, and its legitimate successors. That signified its complete severance from the revolted northern Provinces, which had acquired the command of the sea. To the great joy of its commercial rivals in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the blockade of the Scheldt was established, and the prosperity of Antwerp vanished like a dream. This blockade lasted during the better part of three centuries. From an act of war it passed into an international condition embodied in a succession of treaties. One of the most prized possessions of the Dutch was the right to close and keep closed the navigation of the Scheldt. The effect of this exclusion from the sea on the prosperity of Antwerp is recorded in statistics that cannot be challenged or refuted. The city which contained after Parma's conquest a population of 55,000, had no more than 45,000 inhabitants in 1780, and of these one-third received charitable relief. The cause is as clearly revealed as the result. The port, which in 1555 had seen 2,500 ships at anchor in its roadstead,

The Blockade of the Scheldt.

and 500 ships sail or arrive in a single day, received in the year 1761 only four vessels.

Antwerp enjoyed a glimpse of its early prosperity during the French occupation from 1794 to 1814. The closure of the Scheldt was declared to be "a survival of feudal tyranny and a violation of the rights of man." When France made a treaty with Holland as the Batavian Republic in 1795, she exacted the freedom of the Scheldt, and for the first and only time the Dutch waived their right. Despite the English command of the seas, as many as 3,000 ships came up to Antwerp in 1813. After the withdrawal of the French, Belgium was joined to Holland as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and it was, of course, impossible for the Dutch to enforce old treaty rights against their fellow-subjects. But after the Belgian revolution, this claim to close a neighbour's river was revived, and once more the European Powers ratified a preposterous pretension. On this occasion, however, it was given a new form. The Dutch were no longer to have the right to close the river by firing upon and sinking any ship that entered it; but they were authorised to exact what was practically speaking a prohibitive toll, prohibitive in the sense that it only admitted of a moderate traffic, and forbade all expectation of its free expansion.

French Occupation.

The situation thus created between Belgium and Holland was really intolerable, and no friend of the two States could find a word to say in favour of its continuance. But old privileges and treaty rights are not easily abandoned, and in this particular the Hague Government resembled every other. The toll of 1½ florins per ton was rigorously levied, and the Belgian Government which had voluntarily taken the burden on its own shoulders found the charge irksome and irritating. Among other consequences it rendered it loth to stimulate the trade of Antwerp.

The Scheldt Toll.

A way out of the difficulty was discovered through the

patient and persistent efforts of the late Baron Lambermont, of the Belgian Foreign Department. The question of river navigation in Europe had been thoroughly discussed at the Congress of Vienna, where the clearest and soundest principles for its complete freedom from all hindrances had been laid down. The arrangements under the Twenty-four Articles for the Scheldt were really an infringement of those principles, and it is to the credit of Lord Palmerston that he strove hard to mould them in a more liberal spirit. His example was an encouragement to the Belgian statesman who set himself to the task of emancipating his countrymen from an unjust and offensive limitation on their own freedom and independence.

The case of the Scheldt, although the most arbitrary, did not fortunately stand alone. There were others less involved with national prejudice which called for settlement, and the solution of which could not but hasten that of the major and more difficult problem. The case of the Sound and the Two Belts was the first to present itself. Denmark had there the same right of toll as Holland possessed on the Scheldt. A conference met at Copenhagen in 1856 to put an end to the exaction. At Baron Lambermont's instigation, Belgium negotiated a special convention with Denmark, by which Denmark acquitted Belgium from paying any quota to the sum raised to free the Danish straits in return for Belgium's engagement, that in the event of the capitalisation of the tolls on the Scheldt she would pay whatever there might fall on Denmark. Thus two principles were very adroitly introduced. First, that the tolls of the Scheldt were just as susceptible of being bought up as those of the Sound, and secondly, that each navigating State was liable for its quota.

Other Cases.

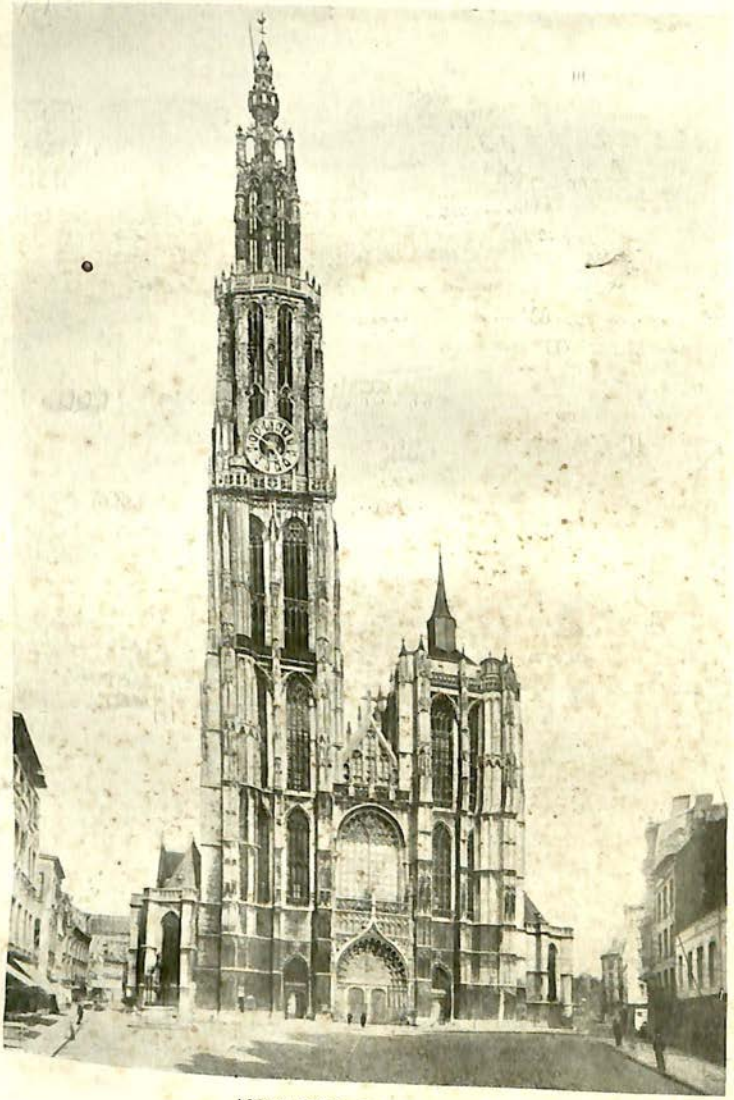
A second case of a similar kind arose in 1860, when the Stade tolls levied by the Hanoverian Government on the Elbe were capitalised at the suggestion of the British Government. Baron Lambermont availed himself of this fresh

opportunity by opening negotiations with the Hanoverian Government, and in 1861 a Belgic-Hanoverian convention was signed on the same lines as that with Denmark.

Armed with these two precedents, the Belgian Government then asked the Dutch Government the plain question whether it would admit or not the possibility of capitalising the Scheldt tolls. For the first time since the privilege had been asserted to the detriment of the people of Belgium, the Dutch made a considerate reply by giving a cordial assent to the new principle. There remained only the practical point of deciding the quotas to be contributed by the respective navigating Powers. In this part of the matter, England, whose tonnage on the Scheldt was the largest, became the most important factor in the problem.

A Settlement.

The quota could not be fixed by the simple rule of a comparison of the tonnage under each flag, for by such an arrangement Belgium, the chief beneficiary, would have got off for a trifling contribution. The Belgian diplomatist avoided this pitfall. He recommended his Government to take upon itself the responsibility of providing one-third of the total capital, or six times the amount that it would have had to pay by a mere comparison of tonnage. These points settled, the British Government was approached, for its co-operation as the largest contributor of all was essential to success. Our policy had always been favourable to the removal of trade impediments, and no difficulty was experienced in London. There remained only to conclude a formal treaty with Holland prior to the summoning of a general Conference for the ratification of these separate arrangements and their embodiment in a single Act. Twenty-one Powers took part in the Conference at Brussels in July, 1863, which finally freed the Scheldt. Belgium contributed altogether 13,328,000 francs, but if the toll had continued to be levied it has been computed that she would have paid in the forty years ending in 1903 not less than 574,523,317 francs, or nearly twenty-three



ANTWERP CATHEDRAL

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

millions sterling. In modestly describing the significance of his own work Baron Lambermont wrote: "In lending its concurrence to the purchase of the Scheldt tolls the Conference will undoubtedly render a service to trade generally. It will complete to the benefit of all nations the work commenced in the Sound and continued in the Elbe. Nor is this all. The foreign States will, by aiding Belgium in an enterprise which is known to be its legitimate desire and ambition, by giving this country and its venerated head a striking mark of sympathy, and by coming forward to sanction by their co-operation the henceforth perfect freedom of the Scheldt, bring a new consecration to the establishment of our nationality, and they will attach to it in some manner the imprint of universal solidarity."

The Freeing of the Scheldt.

The freeing of the Scheldt removed the fetters that had hindered the development of Antwerp since the days of its prime in the middle of the sixteenth century. Since that event, the city has burst its barriers, stretching out in every direction, and trebling its population. It has become not merely the chief outlet of Belgium, but one of the principal seaports of Europe. The place has enormous military importance as the bulwark of Belgian independence, but that matter will be dealt with in another chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF BRUGES AND GHENT

THE story of the sister cities Bruges and Ghent may be told together, and as it forms the best known part of Belgian history a brief summary of the leading incidents will suffice.

The Sister Cities.

The story of Bruges begins with the Foresters of Flanders, the officers entrusted by Charlemagne with the guard of that part of his kingdom who eventually became Counts of Flanders. Bruges itself, at the commencement, was known as Flanders (Vlaenderen). It was Baldwin Bras de Fer who gave it a separate name, and that no more high sounding than the place of a bridge. His son, the second Baldwin, fortified it, Ghent, Courtrai and Ypres at the same time thus founding together the four famous Flemish communes. Baldwin II married Elstrud, the daughter of Alfred, thus establishing the first link between England and Flanders. The first mention of Ghent is slightly earlier than that of Bruges. It was one of Charlemagne's two naval arsenals—the other being Boulogne—and on one occasion the Norman pirates came up the Scheldt in their light draught snekkars and burnt his ships.

If the erection of walls was the first step in the growth of cities, the more important incident in the life of those of Flanders was the establishment of cloth markets in or about the year 960. These markets were established round the principal church, and were distinguished by the name Kerkmesse (Kirk, church, and messe, market). The word soon became "kermesse," and is still in use as the popular name for a Fair. The creation of all Flemish towns was marked by three phases. The building of a church was the first phase.

Cloth Markets.

This occurred, as a rule, in the seventh and eighth centuries. The next was the construction of a wall and fortified gates, which may be assigned to the ninth century. The concluding phase was the opening of the cloth markets in the tenth century. The Flemish people thus turned at an earlier period than any other race in northern Europe from agriculture to industry.

A century after the opening of the cloth markets, the citizens who had laid the basis of a sound and expanding prosperity began to talk of and clamour for their rights. Their first triumph was the acquisition of the privilege of erecting a belfry to be used for the purpose of summoning the citizens to public meeting. Up to that moment the only bells had been those in the churches, and the acquisition of a separate belfry was as hard to win as it was highly prized. But the first distinct civic charter was granted neither to Bruges nor to Ghent, but to a town specially created for the purpose of being ruled by a new law by Baldwin VI in the year 1068. This was Grammont, a place which otherwise never obtained fame, and which is to-day a town of the fifth order. None the less the Charter of Grammont is "the most ancient written monument of civil and criminal laws in Flanders." It established trial by jury, it exempted the citizens from Church law except in matters of religion, and it introduced a system of fines in lieu of the almost uniform death sentence. Bruges and Ghent were naturally indisposed to leave Grammont a monopoly of such privileges.

Having won their charters from their Counts, the people of Bruges and their allied communes, were in danger of losing them at the hands of the French King who invaded and occupied a great part of Flanders in the first year of the fourteenth century. This foreign occupation did not last long. The French garrison was massacred during what was known as the Bruges Matins. A few months later this success was completed at the battle of Guinegate or "of the spurs" outside

The Battle of the Spurs.

Courtrai on 11th July, 1302, a memorable date in the history of Flanders. Although this great victory put an end to the fear of a French conquest it was followed by a struggle between the Counts and the communes that went on for two centuries, and that only ended in the time of the Emperor Charles V.

The "heroic epoch" of Flanders reached its culminating point with the Arteveldes. The elder, James, was not merely the leading tribune of Ghent, but he was the one Belgian who, prior to the nineteenth century, might be called a great national statesman. His conception of Flanders was that of a great "neutral state" strong enough to repel all assailants, and therefore able to devote its attention to the accumulation of wealth and the enjoyment of industrial prosperity. To accomplish this required an efficient military organisation and the expenditure of money. His views were too large for his age. He was accused of wasting the public treasure, and massacred by his brother citizens. Unwittingly the citizens by declining to follow a national policy, had struck the first blow at the continuance of their own commercial existence. The result proved the truth of the saying that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." The assassination of James van Artevelde occurred on 17th July, 1345; the people of Ghent expiated their crime on 27th November, 1382, when their forces, led by his son Philip, were routed on the field of Roosebeke by their Count and his French allies.

James van Artevelde.

The highest point of Bruges' prosperity was reached soon after the establishment of the Burgundian rule, and the third marriage of Duke Philip the Good in the year 1430 may be fixed upon as its apogee. It was an incident of special interest for several reasons. The same summer witnessed the Duke's capture of Joan of Arc, and his handing her over to the tender mercies of the Bishop of Beauvais, and also the founding of the most famous order of the Golden Fleece, named in double honour of the mythological quest, and of the source of local

The Golden Fleece.

prosperity. Philip's third bride was Isabel of Portugal, great granddaughter of John of Gaunt, and she became the mother of Charles the Bold. Our Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V, had married Anne, sister of Philip, and owing to English defeats in France it had been arranged that Bedford should resign to his brother-in-law the Regency of France which the hero of Agincourt had placed in his charge. From many points of view the occasion was a memorable one, but the one fact that endured longest was the creation of the order of the Golden Fleece.

There seems good reason to believe that the Golden Fleece was founded by the Duke of Burgundy out of a spirit of emulation. He was a Knight of the Garter, established by Edward III three-quarters of a century earlier, and he resolved to have his own Order and to endow it with features peculiar to itself. The Garter was a chivalric order with a decoration and a badge; the Fleece was a distinct power in the land with its members immune from the general law. A Knight of the Golden Fleece could only be tried by the Chapter of his order. When Alva caused Egmont and Horn to be executed the worst crime he committed in the eyes of many was in violating the rules of the Order to which he also belonged, and in ignoring the privileges of two brother Knights.

The Order was ostensibly founded in honour of the new bride, and so intent was the Duke on its maintenance that he passed on its sovereignty to the husband of the last heiress of his family. This timely prescience saved the order from extinction on more than one occasion. The first motto chosen for the Order was essentially applicable to the marriage —"*Aultre n'aray, Dame Isabeau tant que vivray.*" As it was his third venture in the matrimonial lists he thought it proper to give the young princess some pledge, but this motto was not long in use. In a few years it was superseded by the motto of the Burgundian family, "*Je l'ay emprins*"—"I have undertaken." The order which was dedicated to

the Virgin and St. Andrew, the patron saint of Burgundy, was limited to the sovereign and twenty-four knights. At first the archives and treasury of the Order were preserved at Bruges, where the knights had their stalls in the Church of Notre Dame; but the Archduke, afterwards Emperor Maximilian, removed them to Ste Gudule in Brussels. When the French Revolution broke out they were taken for safety to Vienna where they still remain. In 1725 the order was divided into two branches, the Golden Fleece of Austria and the Golden Fleece of Spain.

The marriage of Philip the Good was celebrated when Bruges was at its prime. A century earlier a Queen of France on visiting it had been so struck by the rich costumes of its ladies, that she exclaimed, "I thought I was the only Queen here, but I see a thousand around me." At that time Bruges was the leading financial city in Western Europe, or as it was put in those days north of the Alps. The prices on its exchange ruled those elsewhere. It was said that more trading ships were to be seen in its harbour at Damme than in any other port save Venice. The Hansa, English and Italian merchants had their resident agencies and counting houses. But a great national disaster was impending, with which neither the skill nor the resources of the men of the age could cope.

Bruges, the Exchange of Northern Europe.

The prosperity of Bruges was based on its access to the sea, but even at the moment of the marriage fêtes it was known that the navigable channel from the sea to Damme was silting up, and that before many more years had passed it would be permanently closed. This stage was reached in the year 1490. The Zwyn became merged in that tract of unfathomed sand extending from Knocke to Terneuzen, which represents the Dutch possessions south of the Scheldt to-day. The merchants and the Guilds left the thus isolated city, transferring their headquarters to Antwerp, and Bruges entered

The Zwyn.

Alphonse Watteyne *Bruges*

MONUMENT OF CHARLES THE BOLD, CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, BRUGES

upon its long sleep as a place of enterprise. Only in the twentieth century has it begun to show signs of returning vitality through the construction of the ship canal that connects it with the North Sea.

The prosperity of Ghent rested on a surer basis than that of Bruges, or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that it was less dependent on the co-operation of foreigners. The decline of Bruges increased the importance of Ghent, which was for a century after the marriage of Philip the Good, the centre of the political life of Flanders. It carried on a fierce struggle for its constitutional rights during that period, and it was only when the Emperor Charles V banding together all the forces at his disposal came down upon it with heavy hand in 1540, and imposed his memorable chastisement, that it succumbed.

The Citizens of Ghent.

Some idea of the stubborn and never-failing courage of the people of Ghent during the last century of its existence as a political entity may be formed from a brief summary of the events that preceded the final humiliation in 1540. The story commences in 1453 with the terrible battle of Gavre—"the red sea of Gavre"—when twenty thousand citizens were slain. Philip the Good seemed touched by the slaughter, for he exclaimed, "These were my subjects," but none the less he hung all his prisoners, including some English archers, who were hoisted to the loftiest trees. Among the penalties imposed were the imposition of a heavy fine, and the suppression of the trained bands of the guilds known as the White Hoods. Yet, in 1467, Charles the Bold in the midst of a turbulent populace uttering threats on the very day of his inauguration as Count of Flanders, found himself obliged to restore all the privileges his father had confiscated fourteen years before. "Wait ten years," he exclaimed, "and we shall see who is master." Ten years later he fell in the battle of Nancy.

His successor, his only child and daughter, Mary of

Burgundy, was left face to face with the citizens, who took full advantage of her troubles. Before they would allow her to be proclaimed they compelled her to sign a new Charter, embodying all the old privileges. Then only would they permit her to ring the bell known as Roland. Nor were the citizens satisfied until they had executed the principal ministers of their last Duke. The atrocities of the individual ruler are treasured up by the historian, those of the masses or the mob are consigned to an indulgent oblivion.

A German Invasion.

What the citizens of Ghent wrested from the last Duchess of Burgundy they kept under her youthful son Philip the Fair. They held him as a hostage against his father, the Archduke Maximilian, who overran much of the Provinces with a German army. One of the incidents of the struggle was when the citizens of Bruges locked Maximilian up in the Craenenburg, and kept him there for three months. He was only released on giving his promise by oath to abstain from further interference in the Government, and to leave his son in the hands of the Flemings. It is not surprising that Maximilian took the oath to recover his freedom, but it is surprising that he was believed. No sooner had he got to a safe distance than he repudiated his promises, and he returned in a few months with a large German army to besiege Ghent which had thrown in its fortunes with Bruges.

This was the turning-point in the history of the great Flemish communes. In bad as in good fortune they had up to this managed to hold their own in the struggle with their feudal and hereditary rulers. But they were now confronted by a more formidable master, who had behind him the big battalions of the German Empire. The citizens did not appreciate the change until it was too late. Bruges and Ghent were compelled to pay enormous fines, and by the treaties of Damme and Cadzand they surrendered their privileges. The wounded dignity of Maximilian for his imprisonment was further appeased by the execution of a

considerable number of the leading citizens of the two cities.

Such was the situation at the dawn of the sixteenth century, when the citizens of Ghent laying aside their political ambitions applied themselves to the development of their trade and industry. The pacific rule of Margaret of Austria, sister of Philip the Fair, acting in the name of her young nephew who became Charles V, was highly favourable to their designs, and it was freely said that the prosperity of Ghent had never been greater than it was in the first half of the sixteenth century. In the hour of their greatest prosperity the people of Ghent brought down upon themselves the wrath and punishment of their prince. Some contemporary writers declared that there had been a decay in the manners and character of the citizens—one of them wrote: "The old represent that everything is changed in the customs of our citizens, and they complain that instead of simple, frank, loyal, courageous, robust, and tall men a generation has succeeded corrupted by vice, idleness, ambition and pride."

A Decay in Manners.

In 1536 the Emperor, for the purposes of the war with France, demanded a subsidy from Flanders, and the city of Ghent was called upon to provide a third of the total. The citizens refused to pay, and finding that the prince had no available means to compel them to do so, they grew defiant. They formed an association among themselves to carry on the government of their city, and they invited Francis of France to aid them against their liege lord. Unfortunately for them that monarch had just signed a ten years' peace with his old rival, and he dismissed their envoys with cold comfort. Still the citizens were full of confidence in themselves, and to show their contempt for the Emperor they executed his chief representative, Lieven Pym, who told them with his dying breath they would be sorry when "too late." They acted thus recklessly in the belief that as the Emperor was

Charles V.

in Spain, and had many things to attend to, it would certainly be a long time before he could think of them.

All their expectations were falsified by the act of the French King, who sent Charles a pressing invitation to travel through France so that he might be able to promptly chastise his mutinous subjects. The offer, unusual in those days, was accepted, and in February, 1540, Charles appeared before Ghent at the head of a chosen army. Resistance would have been futile; none was attempted. Having occupied the city with his troops, Charles made a solemn entry at the head of his generals and courtiers. A formal indictment was drafted, and Ghent was placed on its trial. The verdict was delivered with all the proper observances, and after due deliberation the Emperor solemnly ratified it. Seven —not nineteen, as Motley says—of the men who judicially murdered Lieven Pym were executed, but that was the full extent of the bloodshed. The Emperor's sentence was directed against institutions and not men—but in its way it could not have been more severe. The sentence began by depriving the town "body and community" of all its privileges in perpetuity. It was deprived of municipal government, and the guilds as well as the city lost their charters. All sheriffs and magistrates were to be appointed by the Emperor alone. Public property, including artillery, was to be ceded to the Emperor, and the famous Roland, which had so often given tongue to the discontent of the land, and summoned the people to arms, was cast down and sentenced to eternal silence. In addition, the city had to pay not only the refused subsidy, but a heavy fine. Finally, the chief citizens had to make humble penitence in their shirts barefooted, and with halters round their necks. Thus, after five centuries, ended the special privileges and political importance of Ghent, the city associated in the English mind with the names of James van Artevelde and John of Gaunt.

The Humiliation of Ghent

ST. BAVON CATHEDRAL, GHENT.

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CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF LIÉGE

At many periods, notably during the troubles of the sixteenth century, Liége lay outside the general stream of Belgian life, and enjoyed an independent existence. The separate story of the Liége principality is certainly the least known part of Belgian history, and no doubt this is to be attributed to the fact that in the Middle Ages events in Flanders and Brabant had rarely any influence on the future of Liége. It was the one division of Belgium not included in the Burgundian Union. The single incident of the capture of the city by Charles the Bold, told by Scott in "Quentin Durward" with magnificently audacious plagiarism from the pages of Commines, probably exhausts the ordinary reader's knowledge of a State which existed for the better part of a thousand years.

Liége Separated from Belgium.

In the tenth century a great prelate, equally energetic as social reformer and as curber of the feudal barons for the exaltation of the Church, founded the clerical State which existed more or less separately from its neighbours down to the French Revolution. It was long a saying among its people—"Liége owes Notger to Christ, and everything else to Notger." But three centuries before Notger, Liége was the capital of the Dukes of Austrasia, and Charlemagne was the first to transfer it to Aix-la-Chapelle.

Notger.

Once established in the seat of authority, the bishops showed their capacity for administration. Animated by a single purpose, free of the petty rivalries which were the bane of the feudal system, they carried on a deliberate and continuous policy. What one bishop left half done his successor

Prince Bishops.

completed, and the Bishopric of Liége, which had been regarded as a place of retreat for penitent or invalid Austrasian dukes, soon became a power in the land. Indeed, at the dawn of the twelfth century it looked quite possible that the whole of Belgium might fall into its sphere.

The Crusades gave the bishops a favourable chance of aggrandisement, and they availed themselves of it. For that remote expedition money was necessary, and as the laws forbade the ordinary citizen from dealing in money which was restricted to Lombards and Jews, there was none available among the classes from which the expeditions were drawn. But the Church was independent of the law—or rather its law was supreme—and in its hands the gifts of many generations of pious donors had accumulated. It had become the great if not the only capitalist.

The sinews of war for the first and second Crusades were provided then by the Church, and by no branch of that great organisation more largely than by the Bishopric of Liége. But it has never been the practice of men, whether marked by a tonsure or not, to give without receiving an equivalent. The bishops helped Godfrey of Bouillon to equip his forces, but they took from him his castle and the feudal rights he enjoyed as Marquis of Antwerp and Lord of Malines. They also helped the Count of Hainaut, but it was at the price of his placing his county under the suzerainty of Liége. But powerful as was the Bishop of Liége, he was not powerful enough to stand alone. He had to lean on somebody, and Notger's successor at the dawn of the eleventh century had been proclaimed Prince of the Empire on recognising the temporal sovereignty of the Emperor of Germany. The aggrandisement, therefore, of the bishopric entailed an extension of German influence, but ultimately Liége became the least German and most intensely French of all the divisions of Belgium. This characteristic was never more noticeable than it is to-day.

The Sinews of War.

The triumph of the bishops over the nobles has been noted; there remains now to summarise the long struggle for power between the bishops and the people. It must, however, be recorded that the first popular rights and privileges at Liége were conferred by the Bishop on the people. These were embodied in the famous "tribunal of peace" which formed the charter of the citizens of Liége for over four centuries. This Court sat in the Cathedral, the burgesses beside the Bishop, and dispensed summary justice on all alike—only priests and princes being exempted from its jurisdiction.

A Tribunal of Peace.

As a court of law the Peace tribunal answered its purpose very well, but the growth of civic liberty and rights could not be restrained. The guilds and corporations took on themselves more and more the functions of political power, and the clerical position was sometimes weakened by the tyranny of a bad bishop like Henry of Gueldres.

The citizens aimed chiefly, however, at the overthrow, not of the Bishop, but of the aristocratic families who had seized all the civic posts and made them hereditary, and in the struggle the Bishop often sided with the people. It reached a crisis in the year 1312 when, on the death of the Bishop the nobles chose one regent and the citizens another. Five hundred armed nobles entered the city hoping to carry all before them. Instead they were vanquished by the superior numbers of the citizens, driven into the ancient church of St. Martin, and destroyed with the sacred edifice by fire. A new law was made to the effect that all city officers were to be chosen by the people from the people.

The Struggle for Power.

The peace of Fexhe (1315) embodied this and much more in its articles. It prescribed an appeal to the people in the event of any serious difference or doubt, and was long known as the great charter of Liége. Speaking of this period M. de Villenfagne, the historian of Walloon Belgium, has written,

"The principality of Liége comprising Condroz, Hesbaye the countdom of Looż, the marquisate of Franchimont, the lordship of Bouillon, and of the territory between the Sambre and Meuse, formed at this time (1390) a sort of Federal Republic. The ruling power having belonged first to the aristocracy and then to the Bishop passed into the hands of the people as represented by the three Estates of the country."

Having gained all the privileges of a free city the people of Liége became arrogant, and thought they could defy the House of Burgundy which had just welded the whole of Belgium, with the exception of the part subject to Liége itself into a united State including Holland and a large part of northern and eastern France as well. The power of the Government as represented by the Duke had never been so preponderant, and Liége should have taken warning from the recent fate of Ghent at the battle of Gavre. Unfortunately for them the citizens were rather carried away by the belief that French aid would be forthcoming, and, therefore, their replies to Philip the Good and his son Charles the Bold were couched in haughty and defiant language. Even a minor defeat at Mortenaeken in 1465 did not bring them to their senses, and when the real struggle began in the following year the citizens were still sanguine of success. The first incident of this was the siege and capture of Dinant, where a population numbering 60,000 was wiped out.

Charles the Bold.

In the following year Liége, after one defeat in the field, signed an ignominious treaty recognising the supremacy of the Duke by allowing his representative to reside in the city. But this humility was assumed, for in 1468 they again defied him and imprisoned his representative. This incident occurred, as described in "Quentin Durward," while Louis XI was the guest of Charles the Bold at Peronne. Louis, to save his life, agreed to accompany Charles on his expedition of punishment, and was present at the capture and sack of Liége when

Capture of Liége.

40,000 of the citizens are said to have been slaughtered, many of the women being thrown into the Meuse from the Bridge of Arches. It is declared that every building was demolished with the exception of the churches and convents. Finally the city made "renunciation for all its liberties" by a humble delegation of its chief citizens to Brussels. Thus was an end put to the rule of the citizens of Liége which a little earlier had been called a "Federal Republic."

Soon after these events evil days fell on Burgundy. Granson, Morat and Nancy followed in quick succession, and the dream of founding a third kingdom in north-west Europe that should be the equal of France crumbled in the dust. The power of the Bishop of Liége revived. Louis of Bourbon, supported by the Pope, succeeded in restoring some order to the city's affairs, and might have done better if he had not been assassinated by William de la Marck, "the wild boar of the Ardennes." During the reign of Charles V Liége did not assert itself, but prosperity was gradually returning, and the city succeeded in keeping the combatants during the religious wars outside its boundaries. When Alva and William the Silent were coming to close quarters in the Meuse Valley Bishop Groesbeck maintained his neutrality by warning off the belligerents.

The Wild Boar of the Ardennes.

As time went on Groesbeck's successors, who were chiefly Bavarian princes, experienced increasing difficulty with the citizens who, having secured the nominal revival of the old charters, sought to give them their full ancient significance. More especially did they claim that all the city affairs should be controlled by the council of "thirty-two," to which the burgesses elected twenty-six and the Bishop only six members. One of the striking episodes of this struggle was the assassination of La Ruelle, the burgomaster and a friend of the French connection. He was betrayed by a fellow-plotter, the Count de Warfusée, who did not benefit by his treachery,

A Troubled Period.

for he was torn in pieces by the people of Liége as soon as they discovered his crime. The Bishop then invoked the Emperor's aid and a large German force captured the city. The burgomasters and many of their colleagues were executed in front of the Hotel de Ville. It was then that the Bishop caused the Citadel to be built on the summit of St. Walburga's Mountain.

French Occupation.

From time to time the citizens had expressed sympathy with France. This was much diminished by the exactions of the French army which occupied Liége from 1670 to 1676. On leaving they destroyed the citadel, and the citizens believing that with it had also disappeared the Bishop's power, resumed their rights. This step proved more than ever disastrous. The Emperor lent the Bishop an army to recover his position. Such resistance as the citizens attempted was easily overcome, and their leaders were executed on the public place. The old charters were cancelled, all political power was revoked from the guilds which became simply artistic or industrial associations. To further consolidate the Bishop's power, the Citadel was to be rebuilt, and a new fort constructed half way across the Bridge of Arches. It was not many years after this event that an English army under Marlborough attacked and captured the Citadel, but the English troops did not occupy the city.

The Wetzlar Court.

At the end of another century Liége witnessed a fresh attempt by the people to recover their rights, and it had rather a curious origin. A dispute as to the distribution of the profits of the Spa gambling tables ended in the citizens naming two of their order as Chief Magistrates, and in the flight of Bishop Hoensbroeck to Treves. The citizens claimed a free national assembly, but the German Court of Wetzlar ordered them to return to their obedience, and sent a German army to enforce it. On this occasion the triumph of the Bishop by the aid of German arms was not long lived. But a few months

later the French overrun and conquered Belgium. For over twenty years Liége formed part of France; indeed the connection only terminated with the arrival of a Prussian force in January, 1814. After Napoleon's escape from Elba, Blücher made his headquarters at Liége during the spring of 1815, and it was there that he narrowly escaped being shot at the hands of some mutinous Saxon soldiers by jumping out of the window of his hotel. Whatever else it had failed to do, the French Revolution certainly killed the Prince Bishopric of Liége. It had found it a sort of Power in Europe, it left it without any prospect of revival. Europe then placed Liége in the hands of the King of the Netherlands with the rest of Belgium.

Patriotism at Liége.

The people of Liége contributed to the success of the Belgian revolution of 1830 more than any other city excepting Brussels. They had fought for centuries for civic rights, they now had the chance of fighting for national independence, and they took it. Without any outside assistance they captured from the Dutch garrisons the Citadel and the Chartreuse fort. They sent to Brussels the Volunteer battalion which distinguished itself in the four days' fighting with the Dutch army in the Park. Finally, they furnished three of the heroes of the whole movement, Charles Rogier, Joseph Lebeau, and "the wooden-legged gunner," Charlier.

Spelling of the Name.

There is one little matter affecting the name of the place that may be dealt with here in a few lines. The accenting of the "e" in the name has given rise to a considerable diversity of practice, and whether because it is easier to be wrong than to be right the erroneous practice has prevailed. It has been the universal practice in England to mark the "e" with the *accent "grave,"* thus, Liège. In former days many French writers did so, and some Belgians. It is just to Bouillet, Littré and other sound etymologists to say that they did not fall into the error. They give it correctly with the

accent aigu as Liége. Now what is the significance of the difference for the ordinary reader? It is simply that the correct pronunciation is as two clearly distinct syllables—"Lee-aje." This approximates most nearly to the Walloon (the local dialect) name which is "Le-ege."

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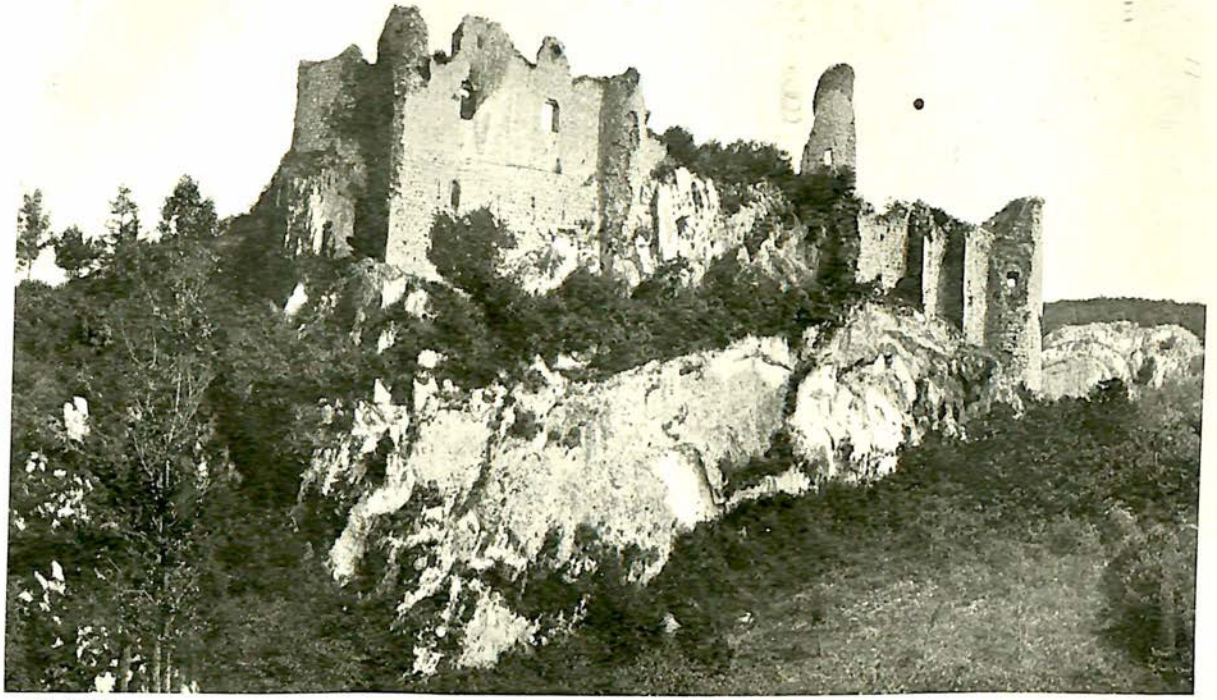

Marischal *Rochefort*

THE RUINS OF MONTAIGLE CASTLE

CHAPTER VI

THE BELGIAN CONSTITUTION

SOME dates and facts as to the way in which the Belgian Constitution was drafted and passed into law will be of use to the general reader.

In 1815 the Vienna Congress declared that the South or old Spanish Netherlands were to be joined to Holland, and to form the Kingdom of the United Netherlands under the sovereign rule of the House of Orange Nassau. This union lasted for fifteen years. Various grievances developed during that period, and the Belgians considered that they were treated with some harshness by the Dutch. The French revolution of July, 1830, when the absolutist Bourbon monarchy was superseded by the constitutional Orleanist regime, greatly increased the confidence of the Belgians in themselves and their cause by leading them to think that the French nation would sympathise with and second their efforts to achieve their own independence. The first disturbance occurred in Brussels during the night of 25th-26th August, 1830, after a performance at the opera of the " Muette de Portici," when Massaniello's appeal for the emancipation of his country inflamed the audience and set fire to the aspirations of the public. Opinions differ as to whether the scene had been carefully prepared, or whether it was one of those impromptus that constitute the eternal fitness of things. At any rate, the night was passed in plundering and destroying the houses of some of the Ministers and others identified in the public mind with the Dutch regime. The Belgian revolution then began.

The Netherlands Kingdom.

Its second and more important phase covered the four days, 23rd-26th September. The Dutch decided to recover

Brussels by force and sent an army to capture it. The troops succeeded after some severe street fighting in reaching the Park facing the Royal Palace, but they had marched into a trap. Instead of crushing the citizens and recovering the city they found themselves besieged in the Park, and more or less cut off from their communications. The incidents of the fighting that went on for four days showed that regular troops have little superiority over armed citizens in street fighting, and on 26th September the Dutch extricated themselves from their false position by retreating during the night, leaving, however, 1,500 killed behind them. The Belgian revolution, which most observers outside the country had affected to regard as of trivial moment, then became a matter of European importance.

Fighting in Brussels.

A week after the withdrawal of the Dutch troops the Provisional Government which had been carrying on the administration in Brussels issued the Decree of Independence. Its terms deserve quotation :—

Decree of Independence.

"Art. I.—The provinces of Belgium detached by force from Holland shall constitute an INDEPENDENT STATE.

"Art. II.—The Central Committee will occupy itself as soon as possible with the draft of a Constitution.

"Art. III.—A National Congress representing all the interests of the Provinces shall be convoked. It will examine the bill drafted for a Belgian Constitution, modify it as it thinks proper, and then will make it the definitive Constitution of force throughout Belgium."

The drafting of the Constitution was entrusted to a special Commission, and at its first meeting the important question was raised and decided as to the form the new Government should take. There had been some irresponsible talk of creating a Belgian Republic. The Commission decided that the Government should be a hereditary constitutional monarchy, and when the point was raised before the National

Congress some weeks later it was promptly decided in the same sense.

The Commission took three months in accomplishing its task, and at the end of January, 1831, it presented the Congress with the draft of a Constitution consisting of 139 Articles. As the Congress had discussed and decided what may be called the vital principles underlying the Articles of the Constitution concurrently with the labours of the Commission, the draft bill did not require alteration, and after a week's formal discussion it was passed into law on 7th February.

The New Constitution.

The Constitution bill contained 139 Articles, one of which (No. 131) provided for the right to revise it should a future occasion arise to make it desirable or necessary. Having defined the character of the monarchy to be established, and the administrative divisions of the kingdom which by ancient tradition contained nine provinces, the law proceeded to set forth the constitutional functions of the respective powers in the State. The King was relieved of responsibility by the simple regulation that all his acts had to be countersigned by one of his ministers who thereby became responsible for what was done. The King had, however, one or two privileges that do not fall, as a rule, to the constitutional monarch. He could dissolve the Chambers, and he could also initiate legislation by decreeing that a draft bill (*projet de loi*) should be prepared on any specific matter of an urgent character. The King was also declared Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, the latter of which did not and does not yet exist. When Leopold I read the Constitution law through before accepting the crown he made the caustic remark—"You seem to have left your King very little to do."

The executive and legislative powers in the State were divided between the King, the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate. The Chamber of Representatives originally consisted of 102 members chosen by the duly qualified electors of the country who, until 1894, were few in number. In

that year the Representatives had increased to 152. A general election had to be held every four years, and at the end of two years half the members had to seek re-election. Of course, Ministers had the right, in common with the King, of dissolving the Parliament at any time and appealing to the country, but the right has been very sparingly used. Members of the Chamber must be not less than twenty-five years of age, and since 1894 they have been paid a salary of 4,000 francs on the stipulation of regular attendance. They are also furnished with a free railway pass from the seat of their constituency to the capital.

The King and two Chambers.

The strength of the Senate or Second Chamber was originally fixed at fifty-one members, but in 1893 the total was raised to 102, seventy-six being elected by the qualified electors, and twenty-six being nominated by the Provincial Councils. A senator sits for eight years. He receives no payment and no one is eligible for a seat in the Upper House under the age of forty. It may be mentioned, as a distinctive feature of the Belgian system, that Ministers who may be taken indiscriminately from either the Senate or the Chamber of Representatives have the right of speaking in both Houses as occasion may arise. The King's sons or other Princes of the Royal Family become by right members of the Senate on reaching the age of eighteen, but they have no vote until they are twenty-five years old. A bill must be approved of by both Houses before it can be submitted to the King for the necessary Royal decree to make it law. Consequently the possibility of an unseemly collision between the two Chambers in so far as it would threaten to involve the name or person of the King is eliminated by the Belgian Constitution. No Belgian minister could talk of inviting or compelling the Sovereign to be the ally or tool of the Lower House in coercing the Upper, and a proposal to flood an ancient Chamber with new immigrants would be derisive when the total number of occupants is fixed by law.

The Senate.

There are some good points to be borrowed from the young Belgian Constitution.

At the time of the passing of the Constitution into law, in February, 1831, no sovereign had been selected for the Belgian throne. Five months later Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was inaugurated as King of the Belgians in Brussels, thus founding the Coburg dynasty which still occupies the Throne. The Constitution provided that the Crown was to be vested in the male line to the perpetual exclusion of females, but in the event of the failure of all male heirs the King was to have the right of nominating his successor with the consent of the Chambers. Should he not have made such a nomination the Throne would be "declared vacant" on his death, and the Chambers elected in double strength for the occasion would then proceed to elect a new ruler.

Choosing the Sovereign.

At one period it seemed not impossible that such an occasion might arise. Leopold I, who at the time of his accession was a widower (having married in 1816 the Princess Charlotte of England, who died in childbirth the following year), married in 1832 the Princess Louise of Orleans, daughter of Louis Philippe, King of the French, and by her had a family of three sons and one daughter. The eldest son died when he was less than a year old. The second son, Leopold, born in 1835, succeeded his father in 1865, the second of his name, and reigned for nearly forty-five years. His death took place in December, 1909. The third son was Philip, Count of Flanders, born in 1837 and died in 1905, and the only daughter, Charlotte, the unhappy Empress of Mexico, is still living. Leopold II, who married in 1853 the Archduchess Marie Henriette of Austria, had only one son, who bore the title of Duke of Brabant, and died in 1869 in his tenth year. The reversion to the throne thus passed to the Count of Flanders who had married in 1867 the Princess Mary of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. The issue of this marriage was two sons and two daughters. As the Salic Law prevails

it is unnecessary to say anything either of these princesses or of the three daughters of Leopold II, all of whom survive.

The two sons of the Count of Flanders were named Baudouin (Baldwin) and Albert. Prince Baudouin, who was extremely popular with the people, died suddenly in 1891 without having married. There remained only his brother Albert to prevent the Belgian royal family from extinction in the male line. For some years the situation gave rise to considerable anxiety, but Prince Albert's marriage in 1900 to the Princess Elisabeth, daughter of the late Duke Charles Theodor of Bavaria, followed by the birth of two sons named Leopold and Charles removed all ground for apprehension, and assured the succession in the male line. In December, 1909, Prince Albert succeeded his uncle as Albert I, and he and his wife, Queen Elisabeth, who is renowned for her charitable deeds, have begun what promises to prove a new era in Belgian history. Their sons are now known by the historic titles of Duke of Brabant and Count of Flanders respectively.

King Albert.

But the Belgian Constitution did a great deal more than found and define a constitutional monarchy. It provided for the liberties of a people in a manner then almost without example in Europe. It is rare indeed to find legislators more animated by the principles of true freedom for individuals as well as the community than were the framers of the Belgian Constitution in 1830-1. The modern politician seems bent on devising new forms of tyranny which are more irritating than those favoured by the most absolute sovereigns. The Belgian Solons displayed a remarkable tolerance not only for their own views but for those of their fellow-citizens. For instance, Belgium was a Catholic country—in the old constitution the Church had been one of the States—the overwhelming majority of the people were devoted followers of the Church of Rome. Yet one of the Articles of the Constitution separates Church and State, and lays down the

A Tolerant System.

Boute *Brussels*

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELISABETH OF THE BELGIANS

law that all cults are equal and free. Another ordains that no one was to be interfered with or disqualified for public service or office on account of his religious opinions. These provisions for religious tolerance and equality were all the more remarkable because no popular movement existed to force or induce the Legislature to adopt them. They might be styled voluntary efforts in the quest of supposed perfection or at least of unfettered liberty. It may be added that the establishment of religious equality has not led to any change in the religion of the people. A Protestant propaganda has never had any chance of success in the Southern Netherlands.

A Catholic King.

Although the influence of the Church did not avail to prevent its deposition from the privileged place it had enjoyed in the State from time immemorial, it was felt that it would not be in accordance with the fitness of things to allow of a non-Catholic prince ruling a Catholic people, and it was consequently stipulated that the King should be of the Catholic religion. But here again the extraordinary broad-mindedness of the Belgian legislators was revealed, for during the first thirty-five years of its national independence, Belgium was ruled by a Protestant King because Leopold I declined to change his religion. His children were, however, brought up as Catholics in accordance with the Constitution, and also with the marriage contract signed at Compiègne on the occasion of his marriage with the French Princess.

Freedom of the Press.

Among the salient vital principles embodied in the Constitution were freedom of the press, of the person and of the right of meeting. Nowhere has the press been more free and nowhere has the individual citizen been more secure against press attack than in Belgium. The sensational journalism to which we have grown painfully accustomed is unknown in Belgium. No Belgian citizen is ever accused or exposed in the papers until he has been condemned and sentenced by a Court of Justice. The accused and their relations are spared by the

adoption of asterisks and initials instead of names. It may be due to the smallness of the country, but at least Belgian procedure is considerate of the feelings of the innocent bearers of an unusual name. Among other important changes introduced by the new Constitution was the abolition of the forfeiture of civil rights and of the confiscation of property. The right of public meeting, which includes that of street processions, is absolute with the sole reservation that during the session of the Legislature there is a prohibited area round the Parliament House and Royal Palace.

Belgian Neutrality.

Everybody knows that Belgium is a neutral State, but contrary to what seems to be generally supposed this neutrality was not a condition imposed by the Belgians on themselves. There is not a word in the Constitution on the subject. It was a condition imposed on Belgium by the Great Powers as the price for their recognition of her existence. The Belgians were quick to see the advantages of the new arrangement which would save their country from again being turned into the cockpit of Europe, and far from raising any objection on the ground of its being an interference in their internal affairs, they welcomed the proposal. Now the Powers were not thinking of the Belgians when they came to this decision, but of themselves; and the problem in their own mind was how to compose their own rivalries and discords so that the balance of power might be preserved. A few facts as to how this arrangement was brought about, and as to its precise meaning may be appropriately added here to the description already given of the Constitution, for the neutrality of Belgium is an essential feature in its political existence.

The London Conference.

When the Belgians revolted, and showed that they were likely to bring their revolution to a successful issue, the Five Powers (England, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia) at once came together and opened the London Conference. The first decisions as to the future status of Belgium in Europe

were contained in the document known as the "Eighteen Articles," which was signed in London on 26th June, 1831. The 9th and 10th Articles defined what was the first view and intention of the Powers on the subject of Belgian neutrality, and the following is their text :—

"Art. 9.—Belgium within the limits traced in conformity with the principles laid down in the present preliminaries shall form a *perpetually neutral State.* The five Powers, without wishing to intervene in the internal affairs of Belgium, *guarantee her that perpetual neutrality as well as the integrity and inviolability of her territory* in the limits mentioned in the present Article.

"Art. 10.—By just reciprocity Belgium shall be held to observe this same neutrality towards all the other States and to make no attack on their internal or external tranquillity whilst always preserving the right to defend herself against every foreign aggression."

The passages in italics show that in June, 1831, the Powers were disposed to guarantee Belgium against attack and invasion as a sort of return for imposing on her a condition of permanent neutrality.

But events led to the abandonment of the Eighteen Articles, and to the substitution in their place of the Twenty-four Articles which were eventually embodied in the binding treaties. The definition of Belgium's neutrality (although none the less fettering on her action) in the later instrument is far less clearly defined or binding on the Powers than it was in the earlier. One brief Article was deemed sufficient, and read as follows :—

Obligatory Neutrality.

"Art. 7.—Belgium within the limits specified in Articles 1, 2 and 4 *shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State.* She shall be bound to observe this same neutrality towards all other States."

While pundits in international law will keenly discuss the significance of the very marked difference in the language

employed in the two sets of Articles, there remains clear the one essential fact—that Belgium was deemed in the eyes of the Powers, and had to accept as the price of their recognition of her existence the status of, a " perpetually neutral State."

Belgium's neutrality in international law comes under the heading of " imposed " or " obligatory " neutrality as contradistinguished from the " voluntary neutrality " of Switzerland.

CHAPTER VII

THE COURT AND THE OFFICIAL WORLD

THE official world of Belgium revolves round the Palace of Brussels, the State residence of the Sovereign, and the five great ministries in the rue de la Loi, in the centre of which stands the Palais de la Nation, or Houses of Parliament. Between the Palace of the King and the Palace of the Nation stretches the park which once formed the private grounds of the Palace of the Netherlands, and which was the scene of the fighting in 1830. That famous royal residence which witnessed the abdication of Charles V was burnt down in 1731, and its more modest successor was erected by the Archduchess Marie Christine in 1782. It served as the royal residence under the Dutch King William I and the two Belgian Leopolds. No attempt to change its external appearance was made till towards the close of the reign of Leopold II. The State rooms were fine, but the façade was poor, and gave a rather mean appearance to the whole. At one end, too, was the Bellevue Hotel, which was held under a lease dating from the time of the Empress Maria Theresa. A private hotel did not add to the dignity of the palace to which it was attached, but at least it was kept in good repair and looked better than the old Hôtel d'Assche at the eastern extremity, which was used as the office of the Civil List.

The Brussels Palace.

About the year 1903 it was decided to embellish the Palace by giving it a new front, and as a beginning the Bellevue Hotel was acquired. Hereupon an unexpected difficulty arose. Belgian opinion is very sensitive in matters of personal association. The Bellevue Hotel had played a part in the revolution of 1830. From its roof a Belgian sportsman had shot twenty-one

The Historic Pits.

Dutch grenadiers, and a protest was raised that even for a new palace front this historic landmark should not be removed. This was not the only protest of the kind. The new façade which was to be protected by a railed terrace encroached to such an extent on the parvis or open square in front of the palace that it was found necessary to cut off a strip of the park. This caused much commotion, not because it diminished the extent of a public park, but because it threatened the existence of the historic pits in which the Dutch buried their slain in September, 1830. Assurances had to be given on both these points before the work could be taken in hand. The Bellevue Hotel was to be embellished, but left intact in its main aspect, and the pits were not to be filled in. Public opinion was thus conciliated with regard to the changes necessitated by the new Palace.

It must be admitted that the new Palace is a very great improvement on the old. It has quite an imposing front in Belgian stone with a fine dome crowning the centre. At either extremity is a columned terrace or belvedere gallery. The public is also excluded from the walk, passing under the palace windows, and kept at a more respectful distance by an enclosed and terraced garden. All State dinners and receptions are given in this palace, and no doubt the new King and Queen being young will entertain much more than their predecessors. Notwithstanding the improvements effected at this Palace and the increased accommodation furnished by the addition of another storey, Brussels is never likely to supplant Laeken as the residence and home of the Belgian royal family.

Before passing on it may be mentioned that the Bellevue Hotel has been converted into a private residence for the Princess Clémentine, youngest daughter of Leopold II, who is now married to Prince Napoleon, the head of his family. Some of these days it seems safe to assume that both it and the Hotel d'Assche, which has also been left intact, will be incorporated in the Palace to which they are attached.

Laeken, which lives in history as the place from which Napoleon wrote his order for the Russian expedition, is situated on the northern side of the city, at a distance of about four miles from the Park. The old château was burnt down in 1889, but it was promptly rebuilt on the old lines, and largely added to by the late King between 1903 and 1907. It was the favourite residence of both the Leopolds, and is famous for its orangery (part of the original building), its gardens and conservatories. A costly Chinese pagoda and a pavilion were among the embellishments added by Leopold II. At Laeken the sovereigns have been accustomed to give the garden parties which closed the Court season, and no doubt this practice, which was discontinued after the death of Queen Marie Henriette, will be resumed by the new King and Queen. Although not without a certain stateliness in its ceremonial, the Belgian Court has never been a very gay one, various circumstances of more or less public notoriety having overshadowed its life. The Belgian monarchy being of modern creation and founded under what are known as popular conditions, there is not much scope for its attaining the brilliance of older Courts, but at least it may be made brighter and more in evidence than has been the case for the past forty years.

Laeken.

In Belgium, the society that would be deemed eligible for attendance at Court is divided into three principal sections —the nobility, the official world; and the most prominent individuals among the moneyed, literary, and artistic classes. The members of the Legislature have a right, subject to the Sovereign's pleasure and convenience, to be received at the Palace by the Sovereign on New Year's Day, but sometimes this ceremony has been omitted. They have no right to attend the regular Court receptions in their character of legislators, and if any of them are invited, it is because they possess what are held to be the suitable qualifications.

The Upper Society.

With regard to the nobility, it is extremely exclusive, and not very numerous if it be counted by the separate families. The Belgian *livre d'or* is supposed to, and practically does, take no note of titles created since 1830. The noble class may be subdivided among the holders of titles of the Holy Roman Empire (that is to say, prior to the cessation of Austrian rule in 1794), a few of the Emperor Napoleon's creation, and a slightly larger number of creations by the Dutch King William I between 1815 and 1830. The Belgian kings since 1831 have the right to confer the titles of count and baron (provided the decree is countersigned by a Minister), but it has been very sparingly used. As a rule, the recipients have well deserved the honour, but its conference does not secure admission within the charmed circle of the *classe noble.*

The Old Nobility.

There are a few historic families among the noble class of the southern Netherlands, such as the De Lignes, the D'Arenbergs (now also De Lignes), the Croys (pronounced Crō-ēes), the Chimays, de Mérodes, de Lalaings, de Lannoys, D'Assches, D'Ursels, and D'Oultremonts. Members of these families have played their part in history since the time of the Crusades, and some of them are better known in Vienna or Berlin than in Brussels. In any case, they occupy a place quite apart, and are entirely independent of all Court favour. Their indifference to the sovereign's favour is a curious feature in Belgian social life, not perhaps to be paralleled elsewhere. Leopold I once expressed the opinion, however, that "What we have of the old nobility is very patriotic." Below these nine or ten families come perhaps thirty more, whose names would be practically unknown to the English reader, although they possess the full privileges of the golden book. Then we have the few French or Dutch creations, and that constitutes the highest circle in Belgian society.

It is not very easy to describe it as a wealthy aristocracy or the reverse, but great landed estates are rare, and the resources accumulated in the last century are due to strict

economy and careful husbanding. A safe description would be to describe it as comfortably off, and free from ostentation. The nobility are not at all given to extensive entertaining among themselves, and the principal entertainments are held in common at a Nobles' Club, which gives three or four balls during the season. The code of the aristocracy has been rigid on the point that its members must not take up with commerce, trade or finance, and formerly even the official service was taboo. Owing, no doubt, to the increase of numbers, the latter point has been waived and an increasing number of cadets find their way into the chief Government departments. Until this change came into operation, the Army and the Church offered the only available professions. The officers of the two Guides regiments come mainly from this class, and latterly there has been a tendency to join the Lancer regiments and even the Grenadiers.

The Nobles' Club.

With regard to the purely official world it has always enjoyed a favoured position in Belgium. The Palace has ever looked with a friendly eye on the bureaucrats as a sort of buffer against the politicians. The new titles have been principally granted among permanent officials. All officials above the junior grades in the five principal ministries, viz., Foreign Affairs, War, Finance, Interior and Public Works, could rely on an invitation to Court functions provided they wished it, and at least they would be present at the annual reception of the Civil Service which followed upon that of the legislature. In the social life of Brussels the heads of departments, usually called General Secretaries, are received everywhere, because all the world likes to get official information, even when it is a thin dilution of truth, or specially made up to mislead. The noble class has been averse to replenish or strengthen the public service, but it receives as a welcome and honoured guest the official who has the time and inclination to pass through their salons. Prominent

The Official World.

among such officials was the late Baron Lambermont, long the permanent secretary at the Foreign Office.

La Haute Finance.

We come now to the third class in the composition of Court life, the magnates of finance, and the leaders of the literary and art worlds. The first-named were the last to gain admission, but they are now the most prominent of all. *La haute finance* (High Finance, as we call it) has a firm foothold in Brussels, and has sapped the old exclusive position of the noblesse. The Quartier Léopold is moving with the times. The Jewish colony is one of the most important even in that exclusive faubourg, and it dispenses a hospitality not to be met with among any other set in Belgium. Next to the financier, who is with some rare exceptions a Jew, come the great industrials who have risen to prominence with the development of Antwerp and Liége, Ghent and Brussels. These men are chiefly Belgians, the Jews only coming into prominence in the world of pure finance; the old laws of Belgium, curiously enough, provided that money matters should be the concern of Jews and Lombards alone. In this section of Belgian society, also, a more cosmopolitan and less exclusive manner is observable.

The Other Classes.

Fifty years ago literary and artistic merit filled a larger place in the estimation of the temporal powers of Belgium than it has now done for some time past. In the days of Henri Conscience and Lavelaye (who had other qualifications) letters were a surer passport to the throne-room at the Palace than great wealth. Nowadays this is different. Perhaps it is due to the circumstance that literature in Belgium furnishes a very poor career, or it may be that there are no literary giants to-day. Writers, pamphleteers and pressmen took the most prominent part in organising the revolution of 1830, the revolution itself was followed by a great literary revival, and a galaxy of literary talent ornamented the reign of Leopold I. But the times have become more materialistic

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MONSIEUR RENKIN, MINISTER OF THE COLONIES

in Belgium. Literature has slackened if it has not last caste. There are no longer the same men. The writers who appear now at Court are there for some other reason. They are priests or judges, or at the least one of the popular instructors called conferenciers. The same observation applies to art. The bureaucratic and the moneyed classes have ousted the purely intellectual, and so far as can be seen there is no likelihood of the balance being readjusted. The noticeable defect in Belgian life is that the ideal and purely intellectual has been swamped and driven out by the materialistic tendencies of a mainly industrial and strictly money-making state of society.

With regard to the official world, apart from its relations with the Court, there is every reason to believe that it is thoroughly efficient, fully capable of dealing with the matters that come before it in the course of duty, and free of all suspicion of being amenable to bribery. This is the more creditable because the salaries and rewards are framed on a low scale, the active service is for a much longer period of life than with us, and the conditions of the pension list are somewhat vigorous and elusive. The inducements to retire are so few that men remain on the active list to the very last possible moment, and there is no civil service in Europe with such a large proportion of old men in the higher ranks. Under new regulations that are adopted in principle, if not yet applied in practice, there will be compulsory retirement at the age of seventy.

These observations apply, of course, only to the staff of the great Departments of State, and not to the minor posts filled by employees of the Government throughout the country, such as railway clerks and tax collectors.

CHAPTER VIII

PARTY POLITICS IN BELGIUM

Changes in Political System.

BEFORE dealing with the question of Party Politics in Belgium and the attitude of the several parties in the State towards each other, it will be well to give some statistics and other essential particulars as to the composition of the legislature, the system of election, the electorate, and the various changes that have from time to time been introduced into the political government of the country.

By the original Constitution of the country drafted in 1830-1, the legislative powers were vested in the king, the Chamber of Representatives, and the Senate. By the law of 3rd March, 1831, there were to be 102 Representatives and fifty-one Senators, and the rule that there were to be twice as many of the former as of the latter was observed through all the changes until that of 1893 when the Senate was increased in proportional numerical strength by the addition of twenty-seven permanent provincial members. In June, 1839, the principle of one representative per 40,000 of the population was introduced with the consequence that the Chamber was reduced to ninety-five members and the Senate to forty-seven. A law having to be passed on each occasion of an increase in the Chambers it may be interesting to record what they have been. In 1847, the number was raised to 108 representatives and 54 Senators; in 1859 to 116 and 58 respectively; in 1866 to 124 and 62; in 1878 to 132 and 66; in 1882 to 138 and 69; in 1892 to 152 and 76; in 1893 to 152 and 102; and in 1902 to 166 and 110. Once the principle is understood it is easy to follow the fluctuations by comparison with the growth of population.

With regard to the system of election and the body of the electorate, a General Election for the Chamber of Representatives must at the longest interval take place every four years and for the Senate every eight years, the Sovereign having the power with or without the assent of the Premier to dissolve the Chambers and compel an appeal to the country at any time. At the commencement of a new reign a dissolution takes place automatically. There is another point, half the Chamber has to be re-elected at the expiration of two years from any General Election, and half the Senate at that of four years.

The Electorate.

The number of electors was extremely limited from 1831 to 1892. In 1832 there were 45,000 voters, in 1848, 80,000, and in 1892 the electorate only numbered 136,775 in a population of six and a half millions. By the new law passed in 1893 the number of electors was increased to 1,354,891 who, by the plural vote passed at the same time held 2,085,605 votes. These numbers had increased to 1,472,953 voters and 2,269,414 votes in 1900.

The Belgian legislature was created in a time of national peril, and in face as it were of the enemy. At such a moment it might be said with truth that "none were for a party but all were for the State." Political parties did not exist. The executive members were chosen more or less from both sides, and formed what was called the party of Union. This happy condition of things could not be expected to last longer than the circumstances which rendered it possible. The passing of the national peril revived the ceaseless turmoil of faction fighting. Someone has said that popular assemblies only exist for the purpose of useless and unedifying broiling in which words take the place of lethal weapons, and then has added as an after tribute to their utility, "but they let off dangerous steam." For all the useful work that is done a council of six wise men would do far better. For this reason the first fifteen years of Belgian independence were full of

wise and beneficent public measures as well as free from party discord.

The note of change was struck in 1846, when the first Liberal Congress was held in Brussels. The Liberal party was then provided with a definite programme and an efficient organisation. Having thus got the start of the Catholics or Conservatives it was not surprising that the Liberals should be returned with a great majority at the General Election of 1847, and they remained in office with two intervals, one brief and the other longer, until 1884. For the first half of that long period the Liberal leader was M. Charles Rogier, a true patriot who had done as much as any individual to make the Belgian Revolution successful. His successor in the second half of the period was M. Frère-Orban, a brilliant orator and the chief of the "doctrinaires." The revolution of 1848 found Belgium controlled by Liberal influences, and it was one of the few Continental States that escaped the cataclysm of that trying and critical epoch.

Party Organisation.

The partial election of 1852 was less favourable to the Liberals than they had expected, and as they were divided amongst themselves it provided an opportunity of once more forming a mixed administration without any definite party colour or aggressive programme. It held the balance between the extremists on the difficult question of religious instruction in secondary schools, and when the General Election of 1854 resulted in the return for the first time of a Catholic majority it seemed as if the period of calm might not be interrupted.

The new premier was M. Pierre de Decker—a Catholic of moderate views and the first Fleming to appear among Belgian politicians—and his brief tenure of power is chiefly memorable because it witnessed an exceedingly bitter encounter between Catholics and Liberals. This was the more remarkable because there can be no question of his moderation, and the violence of the attack on his measures was due

not to their purport but to the opinion among the Liberal leaders that in this way alone could they return to office. The Catholic party had a majority in the Chamber, therefore M. Frère-Orban appealed to the masses. The threat of a revolution was made and for the first time in the history of constitutional Belgium street demonstrations were the order of the day. It was so well known that these were engineered by those desirous of returning to office that the agitation was called "the kid-gloved revolution." However, the Premier lost his nerve and resigned. The Liberals returned to office in 1857, and remained there without a break till 1870.

Important Elections.

The elections of 1860 and 1864 were remarkable for the first appearance of the advanced Liberals who wished to give legislative effect to the extreme arguments used when Frère-Orban was in opposition and only thinking how best to get back to office. But Frère-Orban was quite a different person as Minister, and turned a deaf ear to all proposals to eliminate religious instruction from the school curriculum. The extreme left led by M. Verhaegen in these years was the precursor of the Socialist Party which has played so prominent a rôle in more recent days. By the time that the General Election of 1870 was reached it had become clear that old party lines were breaking down, and that soon the Chamber would be divided among three parties. What was not expected was that the swing of the pendulum towards Radicalism would bring the Catholic party into office. The electors of the country returned Conservative representatives with a clear majority over the two sections of the Liberal party.

This defeat at a moment when they fully counted on complete victory filled the Liberals with wrath, and they determined to make the position of the Catholic Ministry as uncomfortable as possible. The session of 1870-1 was particularly stormy, both inside and outside the Chamber. While prominent politicians spoke loudly of violations of the

Constitution, bringing in the King's name, the mob demonstrated in the streets to cries for a Republic, and serious events occurred in Brussels and Antwerp. In a certain degree these demonstrations were not without result. The Premier, an advanced Catholic, resigned in favour of one less extreme, and M. Jules Malou became Minister of Finance with a definite programme for the improvement of labour conditions, the increase of the electorate, and the introduction of the ballot. As the Catholic party possessed a majority of twenty-two the bitterness of party strife became somewhat allayed during the next two sessions, and in November, 1873, the King felt himself able to state that "calm and prosperous, Belgium in 1873 may be proud of the past and look at the future with serene confidence." At the General Election of 1874 the Catholics found their majority reduced to fourteen. The partial elections of 1876 further reduced it to twelve. As these majorities may appear small it should be remembered that they are equivalent to four times the number in our own House of Commons.

The year 1877 was remarkable for three important political events. Voting by ballot was introduced, the Chamber was increased by ten representatives and the Senate by five, and the first avowedly Socialist meeting was held at Ghent. The first election under the new system was held in June, 1878, when the Liberals secured a majority of twelve, and M. Frère-Orban returned to power. The Catholic party had done quite well enough during its eight years tenure of office to remove the reproach that had often been made against it, that it did not know how to govern. During the critical period of the Franco-German War it had upheld the honour and neutrality of Belgium, and in the region of domestic affairs it had given the elector security in voting and ameliorated the conditions of the labour classes.

Appearance of Socialists.

With the return of the Liberal party to power began one of the stormiest periods in Belgian history. The new Ministry

resorted to a policy of what was called action, and which was really a course of aggression against everything their opponents held dear. They began by removing several Catholic Governors of the Provinces; diminishing the powers of the "Commissions Permanentes" (the highest division in the system of local self-government in Belgium) and flooding the civil and more especially the educational service with their own nominees. Having thus prepared the way they brought in their Education Bill which was avowedly intended to deal a fatal blow to the Church by eliminating all religious instruction from primary schools. The measure was passed into law, and for five years "State instruction was placed under the exclusive control of the Civil authorities." In consequence of this law one-third of the children left the primary State schools to join those which the Church established wherever they had the means. A rupture with the Vatican followed, and the bitterness of the strife between the Catholics and Liberals was shown by the refusal of the Church to take any part in the National festivities held in 1880 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Belgian independence.

Universal Suffrage Demanded.

Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Catholic party under the able and energetic direction of M. Malou to improve their organisation and rouse the country, the partial elections of 1880 increased the Liberal majority by four votes. The Liberals, however, had troubles of their own. Far as M. Frère-Orban had gone he had not gone anything like far enough to satisfy the extreme wing of his followers. During the session of 1881 M. Janson and his band of Radicals demanded Universal Suffrage and threatened to upset the Government unless it brought in a bill to that effect. M. Frère-Orban refused to give way on this point, and as a "doctrinaire" favoured a restricted instead of an enlarged franchise. The utmost concession he would make was the granting of a vote for an educational qualification to be established by public examination. The Radical section

finding its position less strong than it had imagined withdrew its demand, but from that moment dated the bitterness of the relations between the two sections of the Liberal party. It was said with some truth that much as they hated the Catholics they hated each other more.

Under these conditions the time arrived for holding the General Election of 1884. The Liberals never doubted that their triumph was assured and that they had the country behind them in their education policy. They were destined to experience a rude disillusion. They went to the country with a majority that had gradually swelled in six years from twelve to twenty. They returned in a minority of thirty-four. Eighty-six Catholics were elected as against fifty-two Liberals of all sections. M. Malou again became Premier, and his first act showed his determination to undo the measures of the fallen administration. He suppressed the separate post of Minister of Public Instruction, adding his functions to those of the Minister of the Interior. In the Senate the "doctrinaire" party still possessed a majority, and before organic changes could be made it was necessary for the Catholics to have a sure majority there also. The Senate sits for eight years as already explained, and in 1884 the period of its re-election had not arrived. It was necessary for it to be dissolved for re-election, and the result of this was that the Catholics obtained in the new Senate a majority of seventeen.

Catholics in Power.

Having thus ensured the passing of its legislative measures, M. Malou's Government proceeded to abrogate the education law passed by its predecessors, and to introduce a new one leaving primary education in the hands of the Communes. In this way religious instruction was restored in the schools which received State subsidies. The passing of this measure into law was accompanied by some sensational incidents. There were riots in Brussels and even talk of civil war. M. Malou retired from office as a calming measure, and was succeeded by M. Beernaert, who was less identified with the Church

than his chief. Thus was the brief interregnum of purely secular instruction in Belgium terminated, and the system of education based on communal control has gone on undisturbed for twenty-five years and seems now to be firmly established.

The success of the Catholic party did not prove as many expected it to be ephemeral. The partial election of 1886 confirmed its triumph by raising its majority from thirty-four to fifty-six. In 1888 the moderate Liberals proposed to the advanced Radicals that they should combine for the purpose of the General Election, but the offer was rejected with the result that the Catholic party achieved a more considerable triumph than it had on first coming into power. There was another consequence. The internal feuds in the Liberal party became more bitter.

The political situation in the country was not as serene as the overwhelming majority of the Conservatives made it in the Chamber. The masses betrayed great discontent with their position and clamoured for the redress of grievances, many of which were only too real. In no industrial country of the first rank was labour then less remunerated or carried out under harsher conditions than in Belgium. Undoubtedly the working classes occupied an intolerable position, and the redress of their hardships provided the only means of averting a revolution. Every year from 1886 to 1890 witnessed serious strikes and collisions between the strikers and the civil authorities. On more than one occasion the military had to be called out and bloodshed ensued. In one encounter near Charleroi as many as seventy men were killed. It was also noticed that every year the Socialist party showed better organisation, and that its attacks in both the Chamber and the street were becoming more menacing. Thus it was high time to think of remedies. A Commission was appointed to inquire into the state of labour and to provide remedies for popular grievances. It will suffice to say here that it did good work by raising the scale of pay, diminishing the hours of labour,

Labour Troubles.

and restricting the employment of women and children. The second of the remedies concerns us more particularly in a sketch of party politics, for it relates to the franchise.

The Catholic party decided that they could no longer avoid an extension of the franchise. The Belgian Constitution was exceedingly liberal in its principles, but this did not alter the plain fact that Belgium, with a population of six millions in 1890 had only 134,437 voters. In the year just named the Chamber passed by a general vote a motion to the effect that Article 47 of the Constitution (the one fixing the qualification of electors) required revision. The next thing was to discover how it could be carried out. The Government wished to raise the total to 600,000 voters based on a small property qualification, but it was found impossible to find a minimum that would satisfy the exigencies of the case. Under these circumstances there was no practical remedy but giving all citizens a vote on the basis of an age minimum and residential qualification. This measure, if left alone, would have gone very near to the universal suffrage demanded by the Socialists. The balance was redressed by the invention of the plural vote which added one or two votes for each elector possessing special defined qualifications. Before describing the new franchise it may be appropriate to give the King's speech in opening the Session which saw the passing of this great legislative reform :—

The New Franchise.

" The Belgian Constitution is to-day the most ancient of the Continent. It has brought our dear country a long succession of years of peace and fruitful development. Like you, I have more than once proclaimed its wisdom.

" But the works of men have only their period ; institutions must be appropriate to their surroundings ; and thanks to the progress accomplished our institutions which were noteworthy for their liberal features half a century ago, can to-day be made better and rejuvenated.

" This has led you in accordance with my government to the decision that there is room to examine several points of our political organisation ; and in the formal and special consultation prescribed by our fundamental pact, the electoral body of to-day has just given you a mandate to carry out a large extension of the right of suffrage.

"Other problems of the same order are attached thereto, and to solve them will be the essential object of the coming session.

"In subordinating the revision of the Constitution to the vote of an exceptional majority our fathers wished that it should not be possible for it to be the work of a party. It is in that spirit, Gentlemen, that proposals will be made to you by my Government. It is in the same spirit, I do not doubt, that you will examine them, and the patriotic sentiments which animate your assemblies each time that a great national interest is at stake are a sure guarantee that the revised Constitution will be another work marked by concord, wisdom and progress.

"There are in the life of nations historical hours when the decisions to be taken may exercise a decisive influence on their destinies. Such is the present moment for Belgium.

"You will bring to the examination of the problems placed before you a profound love of your country, and the generous views more than ever demanded by the incessant progress of modern ideas."

The Plural Vote.

It was not until the session of 1893 was well advanced that a definite scheme was elaborated and passed into law. The new qualifications are set forth in the following statement, and it only remains to add that they are those which are at present in force.

"One vote for every Belgian citizen on reaching the age of twenty-five, and who has resided for one year in the same commune.

"One Extra Vote for every elector on reaching the age of thirty-five who is married, or if a widower who has legitimate descendants provided that he pays 5 francs of direct taxation, or shows that he is exempt from such payment.

"Two Extra Votes for every elector who is proprietor of real estate with a minimum cadastral revenue of 48 francs, or who shows that he derives the sum of 100 francs yearly from an investment in State Stocks or Savings Banks.

"(*or*) Two Extra Votes for every elector (1) holding diplomas of various descriptions enumerated in Art. 17; or (2) holding Government Posts or Public dignities enumerated in Art. 19.

"Maximum number of votes for any elector is three."

In addition to the creation of the plural vote a further defence for society was formed in the increase of the Senate in numbers and by importing into it a more permanent element. The numbers of the Senate as fixed by the original law were to be half those of the Chamber, and the law of

1893 made no change in this respect. These members were elected for eight years, half retiring for re-election at the expiration of four years. But the new law introduced a new element. The Provincial Councils were to delegate twenty-seven representatives to the Senate, and these nominees of the Nine Provinces sit independently of all elections.

It was computed that the new law created 1,200,000 electors who would possess 1,900,000 votes. Notwithstanding the ingenious innovation of the plural vote the Conservatives naturally regarded with no little trepidation the possible outcome of this surrender to the demands of the democracy. The elections of 1892, under the old system, had given a return of ninety-three Catholics to fifty-nine Liberals of all shades. Curiosity was naturally felt as to the results of the election of 1894 with the new franchise. It resulted in the return of 104 Catholics, twenty Liberals and Radicals, and twenty-eight Socialists. The old "doctrinaire" party was practically wiped out. The partial elections of 1896 further increased the Catholic majority which then reached its highest point. The new Chamber contained 112 Catholics, only twelve Liberals and twenty-eight Socialists.

Proportional Representation.

The authors of the new franchise had conceived that it would greatly favour the Liberals, and as a further precaution for the protection of minorities M. Beernaert had proposed to supplement the plural vote with a measure of "proportional representation." His party would not support him, and therefore he resigned in 1894. The overwhelming Catholic majority in the Chamber, which was in excess of all proportion to the votes recorded for the several parties, was in itself an incitement to the attacks of their political adversaries. The Socialists who had only twenty-eight seats for nearly half-a-million votes clamoured loudly for universal suffrage, while the Liberals and the moderate Catholics demanded the introduction of "proportional representation" which would certainly equalise the chances of all parties. It was amid

riotous scenes in both the Chambers and the streets that the new reform was passed into law in 1899.

By the system of proportional representation Belgium is divided into a fixed number of electoral districts, and each district has the number of its members apportioned in accordance with the total strength of each party in it. As a rule, there are only three parties, but the presence of a Catholic Democrat would raise the total to four. The number of seats to be filled is divided by the number of parties, and then distributed in the proportion of the total votes recorded for each. By this system the smallest minority is certain of one seat. The following instance will perhaps make the system clear. An electoral district with 40,000 recorded votes returns seven members. Four parties contest it with the result that the total votes are Catholics, 25,000; Liberals, 8,000; Socialists, 5,000, and Catholic Democrats, 2,000. The seven seats would then be distributed as follows, one to the Catholic Democrat, one each to the Liberals and Socialists, and four to the Catholics.

Equalisation of Parties.

Just as it had been anticipated that the new Franchise would greatly favour the Liberals in 1894, so was it reckoned in 1899 that the introduction of proportional representation could not fail to be followed by a marked movement towards an equalisation of parties. The estimate of the Liberals of the result of the 1900 election was a total of eighty Catholics as against seventy-two Liberals and Socialists, the two sections of the Left having sunk their differences for a time in the hope of shortening the term of Catholic power. Fourteen new seats had also been created, raising the total to 166. The result of the Election showed ninety-five Catholics, thirty-five Liberals, thirty-four Socialists and two Catholic Democrats, the Catholic majority being still twenty-four. As this majority has been steadily reduced at each subsequent election, the Liberal prophecy was not so far out as it at first appeared. In 1904 the majority fell to twenty, in

1906 to twelve, in 1908 to eight, and in 1910 to six, which is the present figure. The composition of the House is eighty-six Catholics, forty-four Liberals, thirty-five Socialists and one Catholic Democrat. Lest it might be thought that a Government possessing a majority of six is necessarily doomed to speedy extinction, it may be pointed out that for the Belgian legislature it forms a good working majority which only a sudden epidemic would cause to disappear. The payment of the members (who since 1894 receive a salary of 4,000 francs a year) ensures regular attendance because it is the condition of receiving the stipend; the deliberateness with which business is carried on and the fact that there are no night sittings eliminate the risk of surprise motions and snap divisions; and therefore provided no split takes place in the party itself a majority of six is just as effective as one of sixty.

Liberals and Socialists.

Reference has been made to the break up and disunion in the Liberal party that went on for a long time after the fall of the doctrinaire party, and it is only right to say that the Liberals and Socialists have a common working programme to-day which gives them equal chances at the hustings. Whether it would avail to enable them to form a joint administration should they succeed in beating the Catholics in 1912 is a question that had better be left till the event has occurred. A curious phenomenon in Belgium's political life is the appearance of a new section in the Catholic party known as the Young Right. These politicians are far more liberal than the older Clericals, and their influence is for the moment in the ascendant. But it cannot be doubted that internal differences in what has so long been the solid phalanx of the Catholic party, are likely to bring sooner to an end the long tenure of power that it has enjoyed since 1884.

CHAPTER IX

THE FLEMISH MOVEMENT

FROM the earliest recorded times there have been two races speaking different languages in Belgium. These are the Walloons and the Flemings. The Flemings inhabit the two Flanders, Antwerp and Hainaut, and are probably in a majority in Brabant. The Walloons inhabit Liége, Namur, Luxemburg, Limburg, and are largely represented in Brabant. Brabant is a sort of link or barrier between the two, and a very ardent representative of that ancient province will declare that he is neither Fleming nor Walloon but Brabanter (Brabançon), and remembering how many distinct tribes there were in Belgic Gaul he may be ethnologically correct. The Flemings speak Flemish, which is Low German practically identical with Dutch; the Walloons used to speak Walloon, a Romance language, but now use French, which has been their language since the Middle Ages. In parts of Liége and Luxemburg the people still employ Walloon among themselves. Fortunately for the preservation of the Belgian nationality the German-speaking race has been severed from Germany by provinces occupied by a French-speaking population, and in the feudal ages Flanders was tied to France and not to the Empire. This tradition has become such an integral part of the opinion of the Flemish race that German Pan-Teutons cherish a delusion if they think that they can destroy it.

Walloons and Flemings.

There remains then the anomaly that Belgium has two languages, and in the eyes of the law and the constitution both of them are equal. A man can speak, plead, and receive his education in which of the two he pleases. In the last fifty years, however, the Flemings have gained a more clearly defined position in

Two Languages.

the nation, and it is the purpose of the present chapter to describe as briefly as possible what has been called the Flemish Movement

In commencing, a few statistics will help the reader to understand what follows, and at the same time to appreciate the importance of the Flemish element in the Belgian nation. The first census of the languages was only taken in 1866. There were at that time 2,406,491 Belgians who spoke nothing but Flemish, 2,041,748 nothing but French, and only 308,361 who spoke the two languages. In 1890 these figures (taking them in the same order) had changed with the increase of population, and the spread of education to 2,744,271 Flemish, 2,485,072 French, and 700,997 the two languages. In 1900 the totals were 3,145,000 Flemish, 2,830,000 French, and 770,000 the two languages.

The Ascendancy of French.

One of the causes of the Belgian Revolution was the passing of a law making a knowledge of the Dutch language obligatory for state employment. This did not injure or offend the Flemings who already spoke the language, but it was a blow for the Walloons who spoke French and who were indisposed to learn another language at the dictation of a foreign Government. The Revolution was begun and carried to a successful issue by the French-speaking part of the nation. Its leaders were swayed by French influences and example, and during the stress of the struggle French and not Flemish was the language of the patriot. The success of the insurrectionary movement was, in a sense, a French as well as a Belgian triumph, and there can be no reasonable doubt that if the framers of the new Belgian Constitution had made French the official language of the New Kingdom, the Flemings would not have demurred. They refrained from doing anything of the kind. No superior advantage was claimed for or accorded to French.

Indeed Article 23 of the Constitution which deals with the matter is exceedingly vague. It reads, "The employment of the languages used in Belgium is optional; it can only be

A FLEMISH MILKWOMAN

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

regulated by the law, and that solely for acts of the public administration and for judicial business." The interpretation of this somewhat elastic arrangement was that all Belgians were at liberty to use the language to which they had been accustomed, thus placing German (spoken in a few border cantons) and Walloon on a level with French and Flemish. But the legislature had the right to choose the language for the public departments, and the courts of law, and it chose French. No formal enactment to that effect was made. French was simply used and no one thought for a good many years of protesting on behalf of the Flemings. For the first fifty years of Belgium's independence the French language retained undisputed pride of place in the legislature, the courts, official correspondence and the press.

But all the time Flemish sentiment existed in full activity, and a movement of revival on the part of the sister race began very soon after the national emancipation which has not yet attained the full consummation of its programme. It is evidence in its way of the truth of the aphorism that the Fleming is a slow beginner, but once he starts it is difficult to stop him. It is also necessary to bear in mind that the Fleming is a zealous Catholic. His religious sentiments have of late years been stirred up, and his duty to his Church as well as his love of country has led him to take an increasing part in current politics. He represents the Conservative force in the modern life of Belgium.

Flemish Revival.

For some years after the expulsion of the Dutch the Flemings kept silent and remained in the background. In 1834 there appeared at Ghent a pamphlet expresssing regret at the possibility of a language which had a literature eight hundred years old dying out, and this led to a propaganda being set on foot for the preservation of old Flemish texts. There could not be a more modest commencement for a movement which has not ceased until Flanders has acquired the virtual control of Belgian affairs. The most pronounced Francophil could

not raise any objection to the printing and bringing together in convenient form of the ancient masterpieces of Flemish poets and historians. Thus encouraged the authors of the movement established, in 1836, their own review to which they gave the name of *Belgisch Museum*, and they chose as their motto the Flemish sentence—"*De taal is gansch het volk*"—words signifying "the language is the whole people," which was appropriate enough.

The movement, begun by T. F. Willems (who died in 1846), might have languished but for the appearance of two of Belgium's greatest literary men. These were the poet, Ledeganck, and the romancist, Henri Conscience. Both selected as their theme the great days of the Flemish communes. Ledeganck—the Flemish Byron—composed his "Ode to Bruges," and his fine ballad of "The Three Sister Cities." Conscience—the Flemish Scott—told the stirring story of the Battle of Courtrai in his "Lion of Flanders," which has been called "The Flemish Bible." No critic could declare that a language which found such exponents was dead or deserved to die. The inevitable consequence of the activity and vigour of these Flemish scholars and their successors was that the Flemish language regained the place it had momentarily lost as the joint tongue with French of the Belgian peoples. As a matter of fact, for the twenty-five years following the first publication of the Flemish Review, Flemish literature was in the ascendant, and alone furnished Belgium with a claim to consideration in the domain of European letters.

Great Flemish Writers.

It was when the literary movement began to reveal signs of developing into a political agitation that the authorities in Brussels manifested signs of holding back. So far as they dared they sought to throw cold water on the movement. For instance, an annual sum was voted in 1845 to assist in preserving Flemish texts, but nothing was paid out till 1854. But while the Walloon Ministers who spoke nothing but French were most

Concessions to Flemish.

averse to admitting the other race and language to a position of equality—their main plea being that as the Revolution had been brought about by the French-speaking half of the nation, its character should not be altered. Flemish opinion itself had become so strong that it could no longer be safely ignored, more especially as the Constitution bestowed absolute freedom and equality for all the national languages. In different parts of Flanders various orders were passed by the local authorities requiring all persons in their employ to know Flemish. For instance, the police of Antwerp were only appointed on proving they spoke that tongue. In 1860, a law was passed in the Chamber making it optional for students on taking their degree to compose their theme in either French or Flemish. An important passage in the bill was the elucidation of the vague Article XXIII of the Constitution by the explicit declaration that French and Flemish were the national languages.

In 1856 the Government, led for the first time by a Flemish Premier, appointed a special commission to inquire into the Flemish demands. It made a very close investigation of the question, and drew up a report for the information of the Government. The proposals of the Commission were so greatly in favour of the Flemings that the Government, no longer headed by a Fleming, promptly refused to allow the report to be published, and it has remained a State secret. In 1861 the Flemish case was brought prominently before the Chamber in a debate which raged fiercely for several days. The feelings of the Walloons were not spared. Then for the first time the walls re-echoed the Flemish speech, and in an address to the King a special paragraph recorded the first triumph of the "Mouvement Flamingant." It set forth the "hope that the Government will take steps to satisfy the claims put forward by the Flemish people which are recognised to be well founded."

The passing of this abstract motion neither satisfied the Flemings nor disarmed Walloon opposition. The *Mouvement*

Flamingant continued the struggle to gain the tangible spoils of success; the Walloons continued to obstruct and oppose the practical realisation of Flemish ideals, because they wished to retain the French ascendancy. But it must be recorded that there were other considerations at the root of Walloon opposition. As has been shown in another chapter dealing with party politics, the Liberal party had practically enjoyed a monopoly of office since the Revolution, and so long as the Flemings were without a political organisation, there was not much likelihood of their being dispossessed. But the agitation for their rights had led the Flemings to combine. They had learnt their power. They were numerically the larger half of the nation. There was another distinguishing characteristic. The Flemings, by preserving their language, had escaped being subjected to French influences. They were not Liberals in the political sense of the word, but Conservatives and Catholics to a man. It was the obvious sphere of the Church to provide them with an efficient organisation and to stimulate the activity of their leaders.

The Mouvement Flamingant.

The Flemish movement which began in such a serene sphere had thus in thirty years developed into a keen political struggle, round which parliamentary factions waged their ceaseless war. To judge by the assertions of the Walloon party the triumph of the Flemish movement would almost certainly entail the disintegration of the newly-formed kingdom. As the Liberals had a majority in the Chamber and a practical monopoly of the administration they were able to retard the final triumph of the Flemish party, but every election brought it nearer by reducing that majority, and at last, in 1884, the Clerical party was returned to power. Its first measures were to give full satisfaction to the Flemings. The two languages were placed on an absolute equality. All official documents had to be given in the two languages; the names of towns, streets, and stations were set forth under their French and also their Flemish designations; and in the courts

and Chambers speakers could use which tongue they liked. In the primary schools of Flanders and Antwerp instruction was to be given in Flemish, unless the father expressed the desire that it should be in French. This privilege was only exercised in Antwerp city, where perhaps a tenth of the population was, and is, Walloon. By a great piece of self-sacrifice, as the Flemings thought, the curriculum at Ghent University, which was in the French language, was left undisturbed. Finally, a Flemish Academy, and then Flemish theatres in Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels, were built and subsidised out of State funds.

Thus two languages were set up on an equal footing in the small kingdom of Belgium, and, although the Flemings are, and always have been, the more numerous, they may be considered for all practical purposes as dividing it between them. All students of statecraft agree that there is an element of danger and instability in such a condition for the common country, and the best that can be said for Belgium's chances of attaining longevity is that the same dividing fact has existed for a thousand years without the occurrence of fraternal war. Still Belgian statesmen have not been and are not at this moment free from anxiety about the matter, and they have turned in several directions to find a remedy. The one most obvious and most favoured was the adoption of bilingualism. If Flemings will not voluntarily adopt French, if Walloons will not exchange the beautiful French language for the rugged, but vigorous Flemish speech, then, it was said, let them endeavour to make both languages compulsory. In this spirit a law was passed in 1897 rendering a knowledge of both languages obligatory by all persons entering State employment. This excellent theory has proved difficult to carry out in practice, or rather the attempt to do so has invested the Flemish movement with fresh vigour, and a more uncompromising spirit. It entailed the study of French in the Flemish provinces, and at once an outcry began that a sinister propaganda had been

Bilingualism.

set on foot for the vulgarisation of French. As a matter of fact, Flemish has retained its position during all the centuries by a rigid exclusiveness. French was never given a chance of propagation within the limits of the three purely Flemish provinces. A few years ago the Flemings discovered that under the law French for the first time on record had gained a foothold within their borders. French is an insinuating tongue, French literary propaganda is aggressive—the Flemings could see proof of this in the fact that their fellow-citizen, Maeterlinck, instead of adding to the glories of their own tongue like Ledeganck and Conscience, had succumbed to French influences—and the vulgarisation of French once started would sweep away the old Teutonic speech that was identified with Flemish individuality and existence.

Recent Legislation.

During the last eight or nine years there has been a feeling in Flanders that the old position was undermined. Here again political considerations must be taken into account as well as linguistic and racial. The spread of the French language carries with it that of French influence which is certainly liberal and anti-clerical. Already there have been signs that the Flemish voter is not so unswervingly Catholic as he once was. There has been no great or alarming defection as yet, but it was felt to be time to close up the ranks and repel intruders. The vulgarisation of French was to be opposed by all possible means, and the control of the education of young Flanders secured with a tighter grip. Under these impressions a bill was brought before and passed by the Belgian Chamber in the session of 1909–10, which is in a sense a social revolution, for it means not only a death-blow to the French language in Flanders but a great extension of Flemish influence in other provinces.

By the old system instruction in the primary schools of the Flemish provinces was given exclusively in Flemish up to the fifth year. French was then taken up in combination with Flemish, and in the secondary schools the two were learnt

together. At Ghent University the curriculum was, and is still, in French. By the new law the father is left the right of specifying the language in which his child shall be educated, and as the vast majority of Flemings will choose their own tongue it follows that the scholars will leave school without knowing a word of French. When that stage has been reached Ghent University will have either to alter its curriculum, or see itself superseded by a new purely Flemish University. The most remarkable feature of the new law, however, is that it is not confined to the three purely Flemish provinces, but that it is to be applied in Brabant and Hainaut as well. Here also the father is to decide the language in which his children shall be taught, and there can be no doubt that a large section of the Flemish population of Brussels, for instance, will select Flemish. From a defensive movement the Flemish propaganda has thus become highly aggressive, and it is little surprising if the Walloons are filled with considerable indignation and alarm.

French Intellectualism.

At a recent congress of the upholders of French intellectualism held in Brussels, resolutions were passed in favour of "resisting by all possible means the political and literary enterprises seeking to diminish the teaching and use of the French language in Belgium," and "calling upon all electors to vote only for those candidates who pledged themselves irrespective of party, to oppose the Flemish invasion, and defend the French language and its use in Belgium."

A struggle has thus begun in Belgium, which the English press has hitherto ignored, that may be pregnant with the gravest consequences to Belgium's future. In the revived intensity of the Flemish movement may be seen one of the consequences of the anti-clerical legislation and proceedings in France. The religious sentiments of the Flemish race have been profoundly hurt, and the French language is being strenuously opposed to-day, not merely because it is in the eyes of the Flemings a foreign tongue, but also, and still more

forcibly, because it is identified among them with irreligion, scepticism, and injury to the Catholic Church.

Whatever else may ensue, a death-blow appears to have been dealt to the ideal solution of a bilingual nation. The pride and the passions of the Walloons and the Flemings seem to be aroused as to the merit and advantages of their respective languages, and in the keenness of the struggle the thought of intermingling and combining the two will not find favour with the masses. All that the friend of Belgium can hope is, that the engrossing nature of the new linguistic and political encounter between the two races, who divide that kingdom between them, will not blind the contestants to the fact that they have interested observers on both sides of their frontier. It is to Germany's interest that the Flemish movement should develop and become more markedly aggressive. On the other hand, France cannot but view with rising apprehension, the decline of her influence—already brought home to her in several ways—in Belgium which will sink to a still lower point if the propagators of the revived and intensified Flemish movement attain all their ends.

Bilingualism Discredited.

Alphonse Watteyne *Bruges*

CHAPELLE DU SAINT SANG, BRUGES

CHAPTER X

THE ARMY

As the Belgian Army by the new law is passing through a transition stage it is inevitable that part of the following description must apply more to what will be than to what is. The following words spoken by the present King Albert in the course of a speech he made in Brussels on 7th January, 1910, will serve as a suitable introduction to what follows: "The year that has just closed witnessed the passing into law of a great measure of reform, one that we had called for with all our hearts. By suppressing the principle of pre-emption, all classes of society are now equally engaged in the performance of the same sacred duty, viz., the defence of our native land. For the future a really national army, both solid and numerous, will form for poor and rich alike a healthy school of patriotism. Belgium will be able to count on it for the preservation of her inviolable independence."

A Transition Stage.

During the life of Leopold I the army was his first thought. He was never happy unless a hundred thousand well-trained troops could be put in the field with the promptitude required for the preservation of the country's neutrality; and before 1870 the presence of such a force sufficed to inspire the neighbours of Belgium with respect. After the death of the first king the military machine got a little rusty, and in 1870 the paper strength of 97,000 men on a war footing produced only 85,000 in reality. Some increase of numbers, especially in artillery and engineers, was sanctioned, and in 1880 the paper strength had been raised to 109,000 men, which it was hoped would give 100,000 efficients. But owing to the enormous increase in the armies of France and Germany,

Views of Leopold I.

where standing armies had been abandoned for "armed nations," the Belgian army of 100,000 men had become by the course of events relatively valueless as compared with those of its neighbours.

The Belgians themselves were fully conscious of the change, and gradually created a small reserve which raised the total paper strength on a war footing to 163,750 in 1900. In 1904 the total was brought up to 171,508. The peace effective, however, was in the latter year less by 3,500 men than it had been in 1870, and many of the battalions on parade were described as skeletons. If exception were made for the fortress artillery the Belgian army in 1904 would have been pronounced far weaker and less efficient than it had been thirty-four years before, while the armies of its two principal neighbours had increased nearly tenfold.

Paper Strength.

The demand for army reform and an increased contingent had been going on all the time in the country, and several War Ministers had resigned because the Government would not support their proposals. One reform was loudly called for before every other because it was aimed at a vicious principle. The military law of the land was conscription, that is to say, the annual contingent was obtained by the drawing of lots by all young men on reaching the age of nineteen. But when a well-to-do conscript drew what was called a bad number he merely paid a sum of about £68, and a substitute was provided by the State. This was the much canvassed and unpopular right of pre-emption. The consequence was that only the poor and needy classes served in the army. It was not until 1909 that this privilege was abolished, and henceforth all classes alike will have to pay what is called the blood tax. The effect of this change will only be perceptible after a few more years of trial and reorganisation.

The Substitute System.

The new army is to have a fixed peace strength of 42,800 men, exclusive of officers, who in 1904 numbered 3,473. The

strength on a war footing is to be gradually raised to 188,000. The real change of importance is that the 145,200 men called to the colours will be fully trained soldiers and young, whereas the old reserve consisted to a large extent of middle-aged men, married and loth to leave their homes. The term of service with the colours has also been reduced as much as possible with regard to the speedy attainment of the minimum total felt to be necessary by the Government for the defence of Belgium. For the different branches of the service it is fixed as follows :—

The New System.

Infantry, Fortress Artillery, specialised companies of Artillery, Engineers and specialised companies of Engineers	15 months
Cavalry and Horse Artillery . .	2 years
Field Artillery and Train . .	21 months
Administrative Battalion . .	12½ months

As soon as the total required has been obtained it is proposed to reduce the term by one-third in the case of all conscripts who have shown their capability by qualifying for the rank of corporal or brigadier.

The infantry is divided into nineteen regiments in all, named as follows: One regiment of Grenadiers, one regiment of Carabiniers, three regiments of Foot Chasseurs, and fourteen Line regiments distinguished by their numbers. All these regiments have three active and two reserve battalions each, with the exception of the Carabiniers which has four active and three reserve battalions. The Belgian infantry is consequently represented by fifty-eight active and thirty-nine reserve battalions. The defect of this distribution is that the fifty-eight active battalions average less then 400 men apiece. There are 2,000 officers serving with the battalions, which is a strong proportion.

Of cavalry there are only eight regiments. They are two of Guides, two of Horse Chasseurs and four of Lancers. Each

regiment on the peace establishment numbers about forty officers and 400 men; but it is not easy to follow how the total strength of the cavalry, which on mobilisation will number 9,600 men, is to be distributed among only eight regiments. The two Guides regiments are always quartered in Brussels, and somewhat resemble our household cavalry, their officers being to a large extent members of the noble families of the Netherlands. They are, however, light and not heavy cavalry, and their uniform—cherry trousers, green jackets and busbies—although exceedingly pretty is not imposing in the sense that those of our Life Guards, the former Imperial Cent Gardes and the German Garde du Corps are or were. The undress green kepi of the officers is even more becoming than the busby.

The Lancer and Chasseur regiments also wear attractive uniforms, the Lancers wearing the old Polish lancer head-dress and the Chasseurs a high kepi of black waterproof leather. The regiments are all well mounted, but whether there is a sufficiency of horses available for the demand on mobilisation is not known. Although the material is excellent there is reason to doubt whether the training of the cavalry is adequate for the exigencies of modern warfare. There is a dearth of suitable training grounds for cavalry. The riding-school at Ypres is formed on the model of the French similar school at Saumur, but it is admitted to stand in need of reorganisation. It must be recognised that a great deal more attention has been paid by Belgian officers to riding of late years than was formerly the case.

The Gendarmerie.

Belgium possesses a very fine corps of heavy cavalry in the gendarmerie. This force has been gradually increased in strength. In 1870 it consisted of forty-five officers and 1,442 men; in 1904 it numbered sixty-seven officers and 3,079 men. The force is distributed throughout the kingdom and divided into three divisions. It patrols the high roads, is employed in arresting malefactors, and keeps a watch on smugglers and

spies. These duties make it more of a police than a military force. But it has military functions as well. On State occasions a few gendarmes are always on show in their full dress uniform of doeskin riding-breeches, jack-boots, blue tunics and bearskins, which make them resemble our Scots Greys or the old French Grenadiers à Cheval. As they are men picked for their physique from the army they are quite a *corps d'elite*, and in the event of invasion they would bear the first shock. They are also specially charged with the execution of the order of mobilisation.

In 1899, during the worst phase of the Socialist riots, the Division of Brabant, Hainaut, and Namur was concentrated in Brussels, and took a very active part in putting down the street disturbances. In fact the Socialists for the first time had some experience of rough handling, and with them the gendarmes became very unpopular. They called them the Pandours, but none the less they had received a salutary lesson, to which M. Vandervelde, the Socialist leader, gave point by remarking that their revolvers did not place them on an equality with men armed with Mausers. This corps is also exceedingly well mounted, and the horses are kept in rather harder condition than with the regular cavalry regiments.

The Artillery.

The Artillery has always been well organised in Belgium, more especially that branch of it which is designated Siege or Fortress. There are seventy batteries of this class on a peace footing. Its training ground is at Braschaet, near Antwerp, where there is a polygon for testing the newest kinds of heavy ordnance. Within the last ten years the artillery in the forts of Antwerp, Liége and Namur has been completely renovated, and is now quite up to date. The field artillery consists of thirty batteries on a peace footing, but there are only four batteries of Horse Artillery. All these batteries have been armed with a new quick-firing gun. In thirty-four years the strength of the personnel of the artillery has more than

doubled. In 1870 it numbered 380 officers and 13,062 men on a war footing; in 1904 the corresponding totals were 565 officers and 29,798 men.

The total of the Engineer force is 163 officers and 1,484 men on the peace establishment and 6,808 on mobilisation. The "other corps" number 670 officers and 2,068 men on the peace establishment, which are increased to 11,538 when the reserves are called out. Among these are included the officers of the Head-Quarter Staff, the military train, the administrative staff, and the military schools in which young men are being trained either as officers or as non-commissioned officers.

Now that the reform of the Belgian army has been taken seriously in hand a marked improvement may be expected in its appearance and real efficiency. With regard to the physique of the men, there should soon be a noticeable change, more especially as gymnastics on the Swedish system have recently been introduced into the army. For many years the Belgian officers have laboured for the improvement of the army under very discouraging conditions. Many Belgian politicians used to declare that the country required nothing more than a police force, and even those who did not go quite so far as this were persuaded that the Garde Civique supplied an adequate reserve for the regular army. It is now generally admitted by most Belgians that an efficient army is essential for the preservation of their national independence.

Improvement in Physique.

No mention having been made of the Garde Civique it may be stated that this civic force came into being at the time of the Belgian Revolution, and the rôle assigned to it was the maintenance of order in the towns. It was also intended that it should co-operate with the regular troops in their defence in the event of hostile attack or invasion. After the war with Holland was over the Garde Civique fell into neglect, and although over 38,000 men were on the rolls in 1892 they were found

The Garde Civique.

to be of little use during the serious Socialist troubles and strikes of that period. One of the consequences of those incidents was that the authorities took up the serious reform of the Garde Civique. All citizen householders were enrolled and required to attend a weekly muster held on Sundays. They were also supplied with Mauser rifles, and in 1905 there were 35,700 more or less well-trained men available to support the civil power in any emergency. Besides the Garde Civique, but closely akin to it are the Volunteers. These are corps that have possessed a distinct existence from an older date, and include a considerable proportion of cavalry and artillery, whereas the Garde Civique is composed of infantry alone. The Volunteers consist of 2,466 artillery, 668 cavalry, 4,809 infantry or foot chasseurs, and 599 fire brigade, making a total of 8,542. The total of the combined corps exceeds 44,000 strong. It is scarcely necessary to say that service in one of the volunteer corps exempts from liability for the ordinary Garde Civique. Since this force was finally reorganised in 1899 there have been fewer street demonstrations, and no repetition of the serious riots of that year when for a few days Brussels seemed to be passing through a revolution.

Belgian Soldiers.

Although the Belgian army has not got a very extensive war record there is no reason to doubt that under anything like fair conditions it would give a very good account of itself against any opponent. The old fiction that the Belgians ran away at Waterloo has been exploded. In the war with the Dutch in 1830-1 the Belgians did exceedingly well, and if the ten days' campaign in August, 1831, was unfortunate the conditions under which it was carried on almost precluded success. Since that period Belgian troops have not fought on their own soil. But they furnished contingents for the war in Portugal and the expedition to Mexico, and in both they served with credit. Their best opportunity has been found in Central Africa, but here it must be stated that no Belgian

troops ever fought in a body. The conquest of the Congo State and the protracted campaign for the destruction of the Arab slave dealers' power were carried out by Belgian and other officers leading black troops. The courage and constancy of these men, of whom the late Baron Dhanis was the chief, gave a favourable impression of the army to which they belonged.

In conclusion, a brief description may be given of the system of fortifications on which the defence of Belgium may be said to be based. After Waterloo Belgium was endowed with twenty-four fortresses, all intended to protect the country against French invasion. They were built in accordance with the best principles of the day under the personal supervision of Wellington, and the French taxpayer had the dubious privilege of paying the cost of this barrier against his country. Those were the days when everyone was mortally afraid of French aggression. One little consideration had been overlooked. How was Belgium to provide troops to garrison all of them in time of peace? The plan of defence was really an absurd anachronism, and Leopold I exposed its defects. In 1832 the number was reduced by five, after negotiations that threatened to produce an European war. In 1858 the nineteen others remained in existence. In that year the Belgian Government took up the question for itself in connection with the refortification of Antwerp. The nineteen were then reduced to five, and all the useless second or third-rate fortresses along the French frontier were suppressed and dismantled. The five that were preserved were Antwerp, Namur, Liége, Diest and Termonde. The only one of these to be improved was Antwerp, where a new *enceinte* and eight detached forts were constructed; the others remained exactly as they had been in the time of the Dutch regime.

The Old Fortresses.

After the great war of 1870 an immense and far-reaching change took place in the range and destructive power of siege artillery. All the Belgian fortresses, including even

JUNCTION OF THE MEUSE AND THE SAMBRE, NAMUR

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

the fine new works at Antwerp, were rendered useless. In 1886 the question was pressed home to the conscience of the Belgian people by the efforts of General Brialmont, who had just made a great reputation by his elaborate scheme of fortification at Bucharest. The Belgian Chambers were induced to vote the necessary funds for the modernising of the fortress of Antwerp, and for the erection of new positions or *têtes de pont* at Liége and Namur, thus further reducing the total of Belgian fortresses to three. At Namur the old citadel, famous for its sieges in the time of Louis XIV, was abandoned, and a ring of nine new forts at distances of four or five miles from the town was substituted. These forts are cupola-shaped and bomb-proof. The guns in them are raised and lowered automatically and have a range of ten miles or even more. At Liége there are twelve new forts; two of the strongest of them at Fléron and Chaudfontaine command the railway and road from Germany. There is no doubt that the Namur and Liége positions are exceedingly strong, but both require larger garrisons than is generally assumed for the defence of the intervals. For instance, the fort of Evegnée, at Liége, was captured in theory during some recent Belgian manœuvres, and the loss of one of the detached forts would seriously compromise the security of the others.

The New System.

The question of the fortifications at these places is of such great importance that it may be useful to give fuller particulars as to the detached forts. Of the twelve forts at Liége six are on the right bank of the Meuse and six on the left. The interval between each of them averages two and a half miles, and the total length of the circumference is thirty-one miles. The six forts on the right bank of the Meuse are in their order from north to south (forming an eastern curve), Barchon, Evegnée, Fléron, Chaudfontaine, Embourg and Boncelles. Fléron and Chaudfontaine command the main railway line from Germany. The six forts on the left bank taking the western curve are Pontisse, Liers, Lantin, Loncin,

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Hollogne and Flemalle. The whole constitutes a position which, if held by a sufficient garrison, would be very difficult to capture. The Meuse, which is unbridged at this point, constitutes an element of weakness for both Pontisse and Barchon.

The nine forts round Namur are St. Heribert, Malonne, Suarlée, Emince, Cognelée, Gelbressée, Maizeret, Andoy and Dave. They are placed at an average interval of two and a half miles, and the perimeter in this case is twenty-one miles. The twenty-one forts together cost four millions sterling.

While the work to be done at Namur and Liége was brought to completion, that at Antwerp, the assumed place of final stand for Belgian liberty, was left half-finished. A second outer ring of fifteen detached forts was to have been provided, but after five had been constructed all the money was gone, and work was suspended. In 1900 two of the missing ten were completed, and at last in 1907, in consequence of the serious international outlook the completion of the fortification of Antwerp was taken in hand and has now been brought to completion. Part of the scheme, which was received with mixed feelings when it was first broached, is the demolition of the fine *enceinte* constructed in 1859. This was done to admit of the freer expansion of the city, but some lighter and less costly protection will have to be provided against attack by cavalry and horse artillery or otherwise the security of Antwerp will be compromised.

The Antwerp Position.

The important point in all these changes is that the number of places to be defended by the Belgian army has been brought well within the capacity of its numerical strength. It is even estimated that with 180,000 effective troops Belgium will be able to place an army of 100,000 men in the field to co-operate with the armies of her friends.

At Beverloo, not far from Hasselt, in the north-east corner of Belgium, there is a military camp somewhat resembling Aldershot, where the infantry regiments are sent in rotation

during the summer and autumn to perfect their drill. In most years also autumn manœuvres are held, and, as a rule, the valley of the Meuse between Namur and Liége is chosen for their scene. The most instructive lessons derived from these experiments are those that relate to the defence of the intervals between the detached forts guarding the important crossing places over the Meuse at Liége and Namur. It is also noticeable that no attempt has been made to defend the approach from Dalheim. The late General Brialmont always considered that to perfect the positions of Liége and Namur a *fort d'arrêt* was required at St. Trond. If he were living now he would probably stipulate for one at Diest as well.

CHAPTER XI

POPULATION AND SOCIAL MATTERS

THE official returns for the year 1908 gave Belgium a population of 7,386,444 persons. In 1831 the same extent of territory had 3,785,814 inhabitants. In seventy-seven years the population has increased by 3,600,630, or in other words nearly doubled. In the same period there has been a large migration of Belgians into the neighbouring countries, notably into France, and it does not seem an exaggeration to say that half a million Belgians reside out of their own country. Indeed, some authorities think that these returns are very incomplete, and that there are more than that number of Belgians in France alone.

Density of Population.

As Belgium contains 29,445 square kilometres the density of population in 1908 was 250·9 to the square kilometre, or 649·5 to the square mile. This density is only exceeded in Saxony, a kingdom half its size. The following table shows the population at the end of the years stated.

POPULATION IN YEARS NAMED

1831	1846	1856	1866	1876
3,785,814	4,337,196	4,529,560	4,827,833	5,336,185
1880	**1890**	**1900**	**1908**	
5,520,009	6,069,321	6,693,548	7,386,444	

Dividing the population among the Nine Provinces, the following are the returns for each of them in 1908 :—

Antwerp	959,218
Brabant	1,454,363
Hainaut	1,229,103
East Flanders	1,111,001
West Flanders	871,636
Liége	894,938
Limburg	269,442
Luxemburg	232,254
Namur	364,489
Total	7,386,444

Rate of Increase.

The average annual increase in the population during the last forty years has been 1 per cent. The increases in the three decennial periods that follow were :—

1866-76	10·53 per cent.
1880-90	9·95 ,, ,,
1890-1900	10·28 ,, ,,

The increase for the eight years alone from 1900 to 1908 has been at the rate of 10·35, and by the end of 1910 it seemed likely to reach 12, which would place Belgium as a growing country on a level with Germany and Italy. The increase in population varies in the different provinces. It has been greatest in Antwerp, which increased by 17 per cent. between 1890 and 1900, and in Brabant, where the increase was 14·23. Between 1846 and 1900 the population of Antwerp doubled, whereas for the whole kingdom the increase was only 54 per cent. Among the towns, Ostend, Antwerp and Brussels in their order show the largest increases. In 1856 and again in 1866 there were more men than women in Belgium. In 1908 there were nearly 50,000 more women.

	1856	1866	1908
Men	2,271,783	2,419,639	3,669,022
Women	2,257,777	2,408,194	3,717,422

Belgians Abroad.

With regard to the Belgians living in foreign countries, the following are the totals given for the seven most important countries. They are the latest returns available in all cases, but they do not relate to the same year.

Belgians by birth resident in

France	395,498
Holland	14,950
Germany	12,421
Great Britain and Ireland	4,588
Grand Duchy, the	3,891
United States, the	29,848
Argentina	5,634

The Great Cities.

The population of the cities and towns with over 100,000 inhabitants was as follows (1908):—

Brussels and its eight communes	637,807
Antwerp	391,600
Liége 175,870; with Seraing	218,508
Ghent	163,763

Bruges had 53,897 as against 48,673 in 1856, a very small increase, but Courtrai had 34,977 as against 22,216. In the same period Ostend rose from 16,118 to 42,606 (out of the season). Among the historical places the following may be named:—

Town	Population in 1856	Population in 1908
Louvain	.. 30,765	.. 42,001
Malines	.. 31,371	.. 59,218
Mons	.. 26,061	.. 27,349
Tournai	.. 30,824	.. 37,640
Charleroi	.. 10,702	.. 27,415
Namur	.. 24,716	.. 32,047
Ypres	.. 16,698	.. 17,542
Verviers	.. 27,115	.. 48,583

The increase in the urban population has only been remarkable in a few places. At Mons and Ypres it has been infinitesimal.

Low Death Rate.

Considering the growth of the Belgian population it is curious to note that it has been due not so much to an extraordinarily high birth rate as to a low death rate. In 1908 there were 24·89 births per thousand of the population, but in Germany the ratio was 32; France, 20·2; England, 26·5; Scotland, 27·2; Italy, 33·6; Holland, 29·7; Austria, 34·5; Hungary, 36·3; and Russia 48·1. The total births in the year named were 183,834, and the total deaths were 121,964. The death rate was as low as 16·51 per thousand. For purposes of comparison the rates in the other countries named in the same order were Germany, 18; France, 19; England, 14·7; Scotland, 16·1, Italy, 22·2; Holland, 15; Austria, 22·4; Hungary, 26·3; and Russia, 30. In Belgium the male deaths are 52 per cent. and the female 48 of the grand total.

The number of marriages rose from 26,484 in 1830 to 57,564 in 1908. The proportion in the former year was 6·50 per thousand inhabitants and in the latter 7·79. The highest proportion reached was 8·70. This occurred in the year 1901. The total for the year 1908 showed for the first time a slight diminution as compared with the previous year, when the number was 58,660.

Marriages.

The number of illegitimate children is decreasing, and of those subsequently legitimised increasing. In 1880 there was one illegitimate birth to 12·89 legitimate; in 1908 one illegitimate to 15·23 legitimate. There was an average annual increase of 29 per cent. in the number legitimised for the period 1891-1900 as compared with 1881-90. On the other hand, divorce and suicide showed a marked increase. In 1840 there was only one divorce to 1,175 marriages, and in 1865 one in 739, but in 1908 the ratio had risen to one in 65. It is only right to say that the increase has occurred chiefly in Brussels, Antwerp, and Liége. In the two Flanders there does not appear to be any increase at all. So also with suicides. In 1880 there were 441 suicides, an average of one per 12,146 of the population. In 1908 there were 970 suicides, or one per 7,616 of the inhabitants.

Since the year 1867 the total number of immigrants has for every ten years exceeded that of emigrants; since 1890 this has been true of every year without exception. Although there has been a notable diminution in the emigration figures, the majority still go to France—54 per cent. of a total emigration of 32,294 souls in 1908. The immigrants in that year numbered 38,155, of whom 16,984, or 44 per cent. came from France.

Emigration.

The decline in the comparative total of emigrants must be attributed to the high state of prosperity in Belgium as much as to the stay-at-home sentiments of the Belgian peoples. The Walloons rarely emigrate with the fixed intention of

not returning. The bulk of Walloon emigrants are those who are attracted by the high wages offered them at Gladbach and other German manufacturing towns, and they always return sooner or later. The Flemings are more adventurous, and in both Flanders the emigrants still exceed the immigrants.

In the twenty-five years ending in 1908 the number of lunatics almost doubled as compared with an increase of 33 per cent. in the population. The totals in 1883 were 4,454 men and 4,309 women (total, 8,763), and in 1908, 8,975 men and 7,959 women (total, 16,934).

Since 1890 great ameliorations have been effected in the status of the working man. In that year there were only 373 mutual societies for his relief in illness and accident, or for the benefit of his dependents after death. In 1908 the number recognised by the State had increased to 7,945. The number of members rose from 228,581 in 1900 to 605,670 in 1908, and their contributions from 2,902,526 francs in the previous year to 8,743,748 in the latter—that is from £116,101 to £349,749. The majority of these societies are affiliated to the State Savings Bank.

Mutual Societies.

In 1892 new regulations were made for the provision of improved workmen's dwellings with State aid. Under them advances are made on the recommendation of the societies for the purchase or building of sanitary houses for the working classes. These become the occupiers' property on a sliding scale of repayment combined with life insurance. In 1908 over four millions sterling were advanced in one form or other by the Savings Bank for the amelioration of the homes of the working classes, or for the benefit of the pension and death funds of the societies.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION IN BELGIUM

THE religious question in Belgium requires very careful handling, more especially as it has become mixed up with party politics. But it will clear the ground to mention that while there is no state religion in modern Belgium there is only one religion in the country and that is the Catholic or, as we say for distinction, the Roman Catholic. In a population now approaching eight millions there are said to be 10,000 Protestants (French and English churches) and 5,000 Jews. Flemings and Walloons alike are Catholics. There is, of course, a difference in the intensity of their faith and fervour, and, speaking broadly, irreligion and free-thought are somewhat marked characteristics of some classes among the Walloons, while they must be considered as totally non-existent among the Flemings. Among those practising a religion there is no difference between Walloons and Flemings.

A Nation of Catholics.

This being the case it will be interesting to explain how it is that there is no State religion in Belgium, and that in the eyes of the law the faith of the whole people counts no more than the cults of a small minority, chiefly aliens.

Before the French Revolution the Church ranked among the States with the nobility and the citizens. When the States or National Parliament were summoned the dioceses sent their bishops, deans and abbots to the assembly. Liége and Stavelot did not send to the States, but they had their own separate Constitutions based on the supremacy of the Church, and more or less dependent on the Pope. The French Revolution ended this system, and after the downfall of the Empire it was not restored. The explanation of this may be found in

No State Religion.

the fact that the creation of the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815 was based on the supremacy, tacit if not expressed, of a Protestant dynasty. Catholic bishops and deans could not expect much consideration from the House of Orange. They received even less than they expected. By Articles 190-6 of the Fundamental Law of 1815 all creeds alike were promised protection, and there was to be perfect freedom of conscience. A still ruder blow was dealt by the refusal to sanction even a partial restoration of the lands confiscated in 1794, for the Church found itself almost stripped of its possessions, and without the means of organising the defence of what remained of its ancient privileges. During the whole of the Dutch regime the Church was in a languishing condition, and only in Ghent and Bruges did its leaders continue the struggle with an unfriendly Government.

Such was the position of affairs so far as the Church was concerned when the Belgian revolution broke out in August, 1830. That revolution was in a certain sense the sequel of the July revolution in France which dispossessed the Legitimist Bourbons for the Constitutional Orleanists. It was certainly brought about to a large extent by French influences which at that moment were non-clerical. It was also not at all clear what would be put in the place of the deposed Dutch administration. For these reasons and also on account of its own internal difficulties the Church did not take a prominent part in the Belgian insurrection, and when the National Congress was summoned the Clerical party was the least numerous and influential section in the assembly. Besides, French ideas as well as language prevailed. No one would have had the audacity to speak in Flemish, and Flanders was even then the stronghold of the Church. No one in Belgium would have proposed that the Church lands refused in 1815 should be restored in 1830-1.

This situation explains how it was that in a Congress composed of Catholics no one protested when the Constitution-framers recommended the separation of Church and State.

But the Church itself betrayed unusual apathy in not making some effort to recover at least part of its ancient rights and position. The overthrow of the Protestant Dutch Government did not entail any difference in the religious clause of the Fundamental law. All cults were to be free and equal in the eyes of the law; no one was to be disqualified from public office on account of his religious opinions. One reservation only was made. It was stipulated that the Sovereign of the country should be a Catholic, but the condition had to be waived in the case of Leopold I, who refused to change his religion. His children were, however, brought up in the old faith, and the clause of the Constitution stipulating that the Sovereign must be a member of the Catholic Church may now be regarded as possessing full and permanent force.

Separation of Church and State.

Since the reign of Philip II, when the Pope first created the dignity and conferred it on the celebrated Cardinal Granvelle, the Archbishop of Malines has been Primate of Belgium. The number of bishops dependent on him has varied at different periods, but since modern Belgium came into existence they have been limited to five. They are Liége, Ghent, Bruges, Tournai and Namur. The last official return shows that the total number of the clergy in the six dioceses amounts to 190 of the rank of deans and 5,602 of the inferior ranks of the hierarchy. All these ministers receive a salary from the State. The Archbishop is allowed £800 a year and each Bishop £600 a year.

The Belgian Primate.

Each diocese is divided into a certain number of curés, and each curé receives £82 a year and is provided with a house. The vicaires, who correspond to curates with us, rarely receive more than £30 a year, but they reside in the curé's house. In measuring the importance of these salaries it must be remembered that the clergy are all celibates. Besides in each church or chapel there are special collecting boxes for the support of the clergy, and a part of the general offertories goes to the

The Clergy.

up-keep of the Church which necessarily includes the sustenance of its clergy. The regular clergy are consequently far more comfortable and well cared for than the small official salary would seem to convey. All receipts go into a common fund, and it is breaking no secret to say that they live very well. Good food and plenty of it is still an ideal of Belgian life, and the priests are no exception to the rule. They are also very hospitable, and when they detain a friend to dinner, a bottle of Burgundy will not fail to be forthcoming. In the provinces the house of the curé has always a vegetable garden, and generally a wall for fruit, and for the favoured guest there will follow a choice dessert as well.

Besides the regular clergy there are the various religious orders which have always been prominent and prosperous in Belgium. Before the French Revolution it was computed that they owned half the land in Belgium, and it is still the practice of the Socialists to denounce them, because by the mere fact that they are better organised than ordinary individuals their wealth accumulates, and their possessions by growth attract more notice.

Religious Orders.

The following statistics show their exact strength and position in the country. In the year 1900 (the latest for which these statistics were published) there were 2,474 separate religious houses in the country. These were divided into 291 for men and 2,183 for women. They were inhabited by 6,237 priests or brothers, and 31,668 nuns and sisters. Of the former 4,597 were born in Belgium and of the latter 26,368. It follows that 1,690 men and 5,300 women of the total conventual population of Belgium were foreigners.

The greater number of these orders are devoted to practical objects. There are 389 houses devoted to the care of the sick, 1,248 to education, and only 178 to an exclusively religious ministration; 47 combine nursing and religious contemplation, and 263 teaching and religious contemplation. Over 17,000 nuns and sisters are engaged in some

form or other of female instruction. Most of the nursing in Belgium is done by the religious orders, and some of them have taken up the profession in full conformity with the rules and requirements of modern science. This is especially the case in the large cities.

Religious Grants.

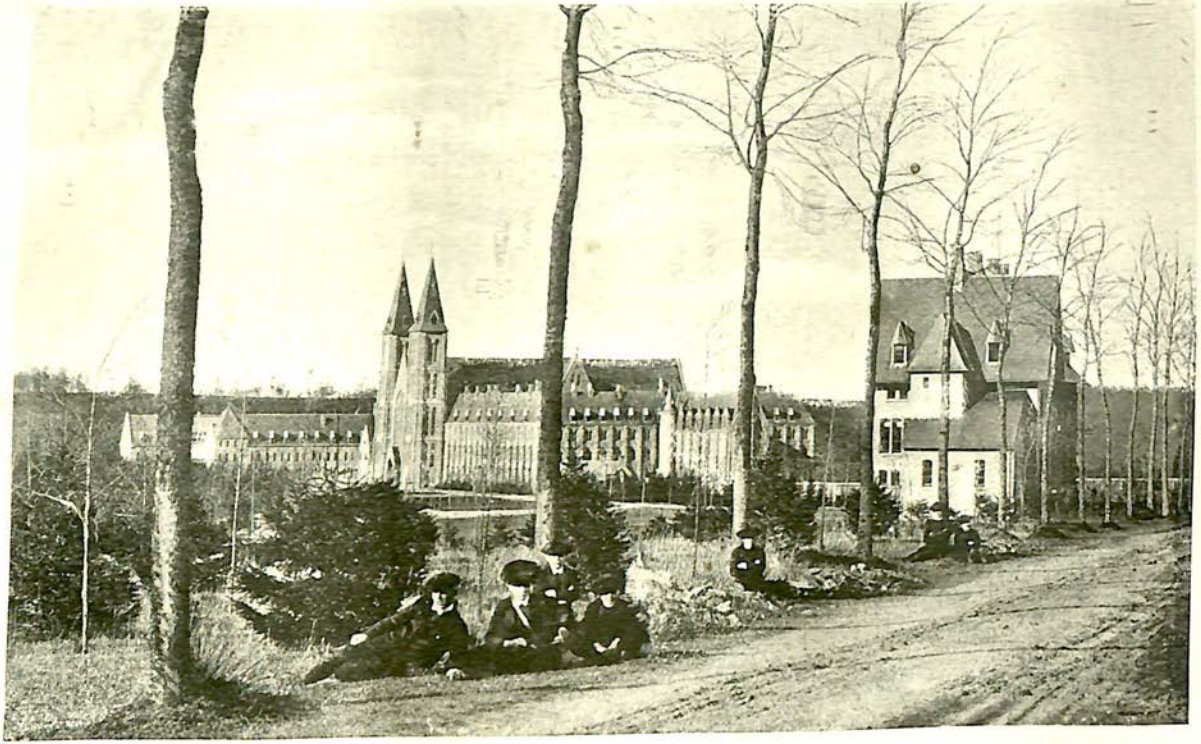
In 1907 the Government grant to the Catholic clergy amounted to 6,202,450 francs (say £250,000) for the year, and a further sum of 900,000 francs was allocated for Church buildings. Other expenses figured at 50,000 francs. The reader will be able to form an opinion for himself as to the relative position of the several creeds in Belgium when it is stated that the grants to Protestants and Jews together amounted to no more than 147,000 francs, or under £6,000. It is impossible to give any idea of the total value of the Church possessions in Belgium, but perhaps fifty millions sterling is not an overstatement.

Although the Church of Rome then is not the State Church in Belgium it possesses an unquestioned predominance that no one could dispute. When modern Belgium was formed it happened to be in a languishing and embarrassed condition. For many years it possessed no efficient organisation and the spoils of power remained with the party which was anti-Catholic. But fifty years ago the Catholics decided to make their influence felt, and they, too, began to organise as their opponents had been doing for thirty years before in the press and among the public. This they did with such consummate skill that they ousted the Liberals from office in 1884, and they have retained the administrative power ever since. The hold which they have established on the mass of the people is not altogether due to cleverness and skill. It has been effected and strengthened by the great services the clergy have rendered and are rendering to the people of Belgium. It is impossible to ignore the fact that they do their best to assist their congregations in every way, and the credit of all the best work in Belgium for the relief of the poor and the suffering must be placed to their credit. The

so-called Liberal organisation is purely political. It is not marked by any beneficent work, it aims wholly at the placing of a particular party in power.

It would be impossible to give even the skeleton of a list of the Catholic institutions in Belgium which are engaged in beneficent work. But the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous combines the utilitarian and the æsthetic in such a superb degree that it may be chosen as an example. Over Belgium are strewn the remains of ancient and mediæval abbeys that were the pride of Christian Europe. Orval and Villers in their way have never been surpassed. Maredsous is not the legacy of the past. It is a recreation of the Middle Ages dating no farther back in its origin than 1872, but here the early builders of the Church might find cause of envy. The admirer of pointed Gothic might find it difficult to choose between the modern abbey of Maredsous (in Entre Sambre and Meuse) and any of its prototypes. Here, thanks in the first place to the philanthropy of a rich Belgian of Tournai, the Benedictine order of Beuron in Suabia (a noble order), established itself and has flourished marvellously. The Benedictines are the intellectual propagandists of their Church. They claim the best teachers in Belgium. They are ready to take up any work that may be imposed upon them. But at Maredsous they have a special and beautiful mission. Nowhere else are pupils trained to such perfection in the pure Gregorian chant. To hear Salve Regina chanted among the aisles of the abbey of Maredsous is a treat for the senses not to be enjoyed out of St. Peter's at Rome. The Abbey of Maredsous is a magnificent modern achievement, and the contrast may be found close at hand in the ruins of Montaigle. It is true that it is somewhat remote, lying on the branch line from Tamines to Dinant, but the trouble of getting there will be amply rewarded. The Benedictine brothers are very hospitable to those who have any claim to expect it, and for those who have not there is an excellent hotel at Emmaus, almost at the gates of the abbey's domain.

Maredsous.



THE ABBEY OF MAREDSOUS

(By permission of the Abbot Superior)

CHAPTER XIII

NATIONAL EDUCATION

THE system of education in force in Belgium is simple, comprehensive and free. No one has to pay for the education of his children if he cannot afford to do so. The instruction given by the State includes practical as well as theoretical subjects. For instance, girls are taught to cook and sew, and youths are inculcated in the rudiments of agriculture or some industrial pursuit. At the Universities degrees can be taken in the several schools at fees that bring them within the most moderate means.

Free Education.

State education is divided into three categories—primary, secondary and superior. Primary education is based on the fundamental law of 1842 which made education compulsory and free, but left religious instruction in the hands of the different churches—that is to say, for nine-tenths of the population the Church of Rome. The law required each commune to maintain at least one free school. The old law was modified in 1879 (abrogated), and again in 1884, 1895 and 1910 ; but the effect of these subsequent enactments has not been to modify the essential provisions of the original law. That of 1910 is the most radical for it will possibly lead to the substitution of Flemish for French as the vehicular language in many of the schools of Brabant and Hainaut. In the year 1908 there were 914,709 pupils in primary schools subject to State inspection, and of these only 50,861 paid any fees. There were in the year named 7,355 schools divided between 4,629 communal and 2,726 "adopted" schools. The adopted schools are those recognised as existing at the time of the passing of the law of 1842. They are chiefly Church schools, and with regard to female education they are more numerous

Primary Education.

than those belonging to the commune. The total cost of these schools in 1907 is given at about 53 million francs, of which the State provided nearly 21, the commune nearly 27, the provinces 2½, and parents 1¾, all in million francs, the balances coming from minor sources. The total number of teachers in the year 1908 was 19,707. These may be subdivided into 8,313 male lay teachers, and 795 priests, and 5,113 female lay teachers, and 5,486 sisters of the different religious orders. This, in its way, furnishes proof that the Church has a closer hold on female than male education.

Primary education is not confined to children. There are primary schools for adults whose education has been neglected or never commenced. In 1908, which showed an enormous increase in the system as compared with previous years, there were 4,473 of those schools with a total attendance of 227,220. The communal schools had 71,433 males and 14,159 females inscribed on their lists, whilst the totals for the adopted schools were 53,673 males and 87,955 females. The grand total of persons receiving primary education is over 1,142,000.

According to the law primary education is supposed to continue till the age of fourteen, but as a matter of fact it ceases at twelve unless it is intended that the pupil shall pass into a secondary school. These, of course, are a comparative minority and consist chiefly of candidates for Government posts.

Secondary education is divided into two grades, preparatory and superior. Of preparatory schools there are over 78 State, 6 communal, and 5 under Priests' patronage for boys, and 34 State and 10 communal for girls. In 1909 the numbers of pupils at the former taken in their order were 15,375, 2,662, and 623; and for girls 6,207 and 2,665 respectively.

Secondary Education.

The superior grade schools are 20 Royal Athenæums, 7 Communal Colleges, and 8 Colleges under private patronage. In 1909 the Athenæums had 6,047 pupils, the Communal Colleges 724, and the patronised 1,133. The Athenées, or Athenæums, which are called Royal, because they are under

the direct patronage of the King, are the nearest approach to the British Grammar School. Classics and mathematics form part of the regular curriculum, and it is assumed that most of the scholars will proceed to one of the Universities. The majority of the pupils are non-resident, but the masters are allowed to take in boarders. The twenty Athenées are situated at Antwerp, Malines, Brussels, Ixelles, Louvain, Bruges, Ostend, Ghent, Ath, Charleroy, Chimay, Mons, Tournai, Huy, Liége, Verviers, Hasselt, Tongres, Arlon and Namur.

In 1907 the State contributed 4,311,147 francs, and the communes 2,171,449 francs towards secondary education.

Superior Education.

Superior or High education in Belgium is given at the four Universities: Ghent, Liége, Brussels, and Louvain, the two first named being State, and the latter Free Universities. Special Schools are attached to the Universities, but these are more important at the State Universities than the others. The following are the number of the students in 1908–9 distinguishing between the regular faculties and the Special Schools :—

Name of University	Faculties	Schools	Total
Ghent	443	640	1,083
Liége	1,670	970	2,640
Brussels	845	369	1,214
Louvain	2,075	250	2,325
Grand Totals	5,033	2,229	7,262

It may be mentioned that at Ghent the principal special course is for Civil Engineering, at Liége for Mining and Electrical Engineering, at Brussels for social and political science, and at Louvain for Theology and Agricultural Science.

Illiteracy.

Notwithstanding the excellence of its laws on public instruction, there is more illiteracy in Belgium than would be expected. Some writers have placed it as high as 30 per cent. but although that is excessive, it is not easy to say what is the correct proportion. It is easier to explain the cause of it.

The teachers in the primary schools do not possess sufficient qualifications for their mission, and what is learnt before twelve, is very easily forgotten when no subsequent occasion to turn it to account or stimulus to fresh exertions presents itself.

The Teachers.

Teachers in the Primary Schools are selected from those who pass through the Secondary Schools, and the selection is made by the Communes. There were in 1908 nineteen normal male and thirty-five normal female establishments, at which there were 2,180 and 2,575 persons of the two sexes in training respectively, as teachers in the Primary Schools. Of these 470 and 563 received the necessary diploma of efficiency in the year named, but the supply far exceeds the demand.

The pay of the school teacher is, according to our ideas, very low. The law stipulates that it shall never be less than 1,000 francs per annum, and leaves everything else in the hands of the commune. The headmaster of a school receives from £48 a year in a small, to £96 a year in a large commune. He also has an allowance for a house ranging from £8 to £32 per annum. Finally, an annual increment at the rate of £1 per annum is allowed for a period of twenty-four years—the maximum salary in a small commune, therefore, may be 48 + 8 + 24 or £80, and in a large 96 + 32 + 24 or £152, but in each case only after twenty-four years' service.

Although the State does not take an active part in the management of the schools, it exercises a certain control over them by inspection. Subject to the Ministry of the Interior and Education, are District Inspectors who are supposed to visit every school in their district twice a year, and to preside at a meeting of all the teaching staff once a quarter. These officials receive a salary of from £120 to £180 a year. Above these are nine chief Inspectors, one for each Province, at a salary of £300 per annum. They are supposed to visit every school once in two years, and they report direct to the Minister in Brussels.

A few words may be said in conclusion about a certain number of special educational institutions which do not come under the regular routine of the educational laws. These exist for technical training purposes.

Special Institutions.

There are sixty-eight commercial schools run by different communes with an attendance (in 1908) of 4,950; 183 free schools with an attendance of 19,004. There are eighty-one industrial schools subject to the communes with an attendance of 23,418, and eight free, attended by 1,686 students. Special schools of a higher grade are to be found at Antwerp, Liége, Mons and Ghent. Among them may be named the Superior Commercial Institute and the St. Ignatius Institute both at Antwerp, the High Commercial Schools at Liége and Louvain both intended for training consular agents, the Manufacturers' School at Mons, and different technical schools of minor importance at Ghent (brewing and distilling), Verviers (textiles), and Virton (arts and trades). There are also seventy-nine schools for special training in household work and duties with an inscribed list of 2,865 attending. In addition to the schools there are 195 special household classes with an attendance of 6,947 attached to different elementary schools.

There are two special schools for military education. They are the École Militaire in Brussels, and the School of Cadets at Namur. The former is far the more important, and the scholars number on an average 240. Formerly it was located in the old Abbey of the Cambre near the Bois of that name, but the position was unhealthy, and a fine new school near the Parc du Cinquantenaire and the Avenue de Tervueren now accommodates the scholars, who wear a military uniform. On State occasions the École Militaire takes the lead of all the troops present.

Military Education.

The Cadets School at Namur dates only from 1897, and there were in 1908–9, 108 civil and eighty-three military cadets on its list. The military cadets supply the army

with non-commissioned officers, and the civil cadets are supposed to be intended for some branch of the public service.

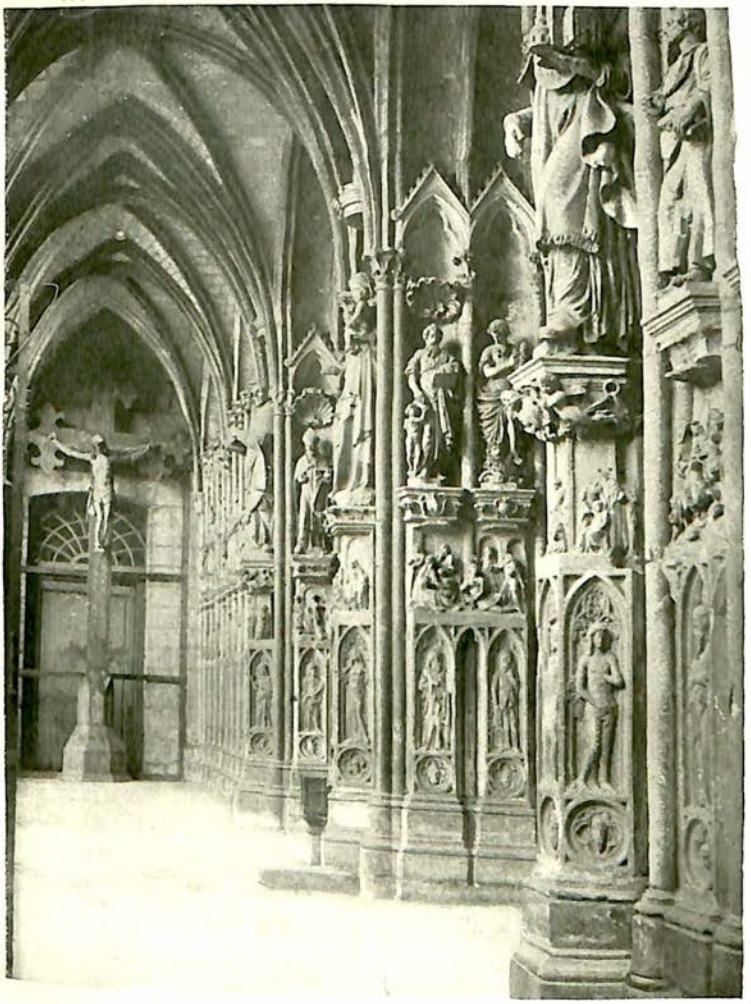
In the same way, it does not follow that all the cadets at the École Militaire enter the army. The educational course there being highly esteemed, many parents decide to send their sons to this school in preference to an Athenée, the tone of the place being higher. But the best of all the schools in Belgium is that kept by the Jesuit order in Brussels, near the Palais de Justice. Only Catholics of good family are received, and the order aims at turning out gentlemen as well as scholars. In the same way, the highest class schools for young ladies are those attached to Convents. One of the most famous of these is at St. Hubert.

Special schools exist for educating the blind and deaf mutes. In 1908 there were in the kingdom 3,218 of the former and 4,036 of the latter, and with comparatively few exceptions they are returned as susceptible of receiving instruction. Of these 1,145 males and 972 females were receiving primary education in nineteen schools endowed by the State. Finally, there are three training schools for the mercantile marine. They are at Ostend, Antwerp, and Nieuport with 160, ninety-five and eight pupils respectively in 1908. A training-ship has also been commissioned, but its cruises are somewhat rare, and since the mishap to the training-ship *Smet de Naeyer*, named after a recent Premier, there has been a lull in the effort to endow Belgium with the cadre for a navy.

A Training Ship.

Free public or popular libraries exist in many of the communes. There are 913 libraries in the 2,629 communes. There were nearly 3,322,644 readers, and 1,535,523 volumes were borrowed. These figures do not include the returns of the Brussels Library, which corresponds to our British Museum. In 1908, 40,997 persons used the reading-room, these showing an average daily attendance of 137. In addition 1,245 students attended the MSS. room, and 8,956 persons made use of the room set aside for periodicals.

Free Libraries.



THE PORCH, TOURNAI CATHEDRAL

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CHAPTER XIV

AGRICULTURE AND LAND

Agriculture.

ALTHOUGH industry and commerce play such a prominent part in the national life of Belgium, the basis of its prosperity has always been in the land, and in its laborious and skilful tillage. Before a mine had been excavated, Belgium was a rich and productive country; when it had suffered most from the ravages of war it owed its recovery to the abundant return of its harvests.

The total number of persons engaged in agriculture or employed on farms is shown in the following table for the three years 1846, 1880 and 1895 :—

	Members of Family Engaged in Agriculture		Farm Servants		Managers	Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1846	550,567	356,008	107,303	69,723		1,083,601
1880	529,673	452,451	141,762	75,433		1,199,319
1895	558,714	457,085	128,277	58,829	1905	1,204,810

The totals show a ratio to the rest of the population in the years named of 24·98, 21·77, and 18·79, thus establishing a decline in the proportional number of persons making their livelihood out of agriculture.

As children and the aged (especially women) are not included in these totals, and remembering that the total number of persons employed in all trades and industries, including mines, is 1,102,244, a slightly lower total, we may safely assume that half Belgium's population lives out of the produce of the land. Agriculture is, of course, more important in some of the provinces than others. The following table shows the ratio of those engaged on the land to the rest of the population in each province.

Liége	10·55 per cent.
Hainaut	12·87 ,,
Antwerp	15·54 ,,
Brabant	16·74 ,,
Namur	23·02 ,,
East Flanders	23·35 ,,
West Flanders	23·72 ,,
Limburg	35·57 ,,
Luxemburg	39·29 ,,

Agricultural Wages.

The payment to the farm labourer is considerably higher in the provinces where agriculture forms the staple industry than in those where it is in competition with other occupations. For instance, wages in Namur, Luxemburg and Liége are far higher than in Brabant and Antwerp. In Flanders, too, farm labour is poorly paid, and, as a general rule, it may be observed that the Walloon requires more pay than the Fleming. It has also to be noted that there are two scales of pay, one with food and the other without. The allowance for food varies from half to a whole franc. In comparison with the year 1846 the farm hand now receives a daily wage with food equal to what he then received without. The following is the official scale in francs for 1895 (the last year yet analysed).

Provinces	Men per day		Women per day	
	Without food	With food	Without food	With food
Antwerp	1·62	1·0	1·06	0·65
Brabant	1·61	1·01	1·07	0·68
West Flanders	1·68	0·94	1·08	0·61
East Flanders	1·63	0·84	1·04	0·53
Hainaut	2·26	1·36	1·20	0·77
Liége	2·23	1·40	1·38	0·84
Limburg	1·44	0·84	1·02	0·58
Luxemburg	2·40	1·54	1·63	0·99
Namur	2·43	1·62	1·42	0·92
Average for the Kingdom	1·98	1·21	1·22	0·74

There is another remarkable thing about Belgian agriculture, and that is the enormous proportion of land under

cultivation. Belgium contains an area of 2,945,503 hectares, and of these 2,215,533 are under cultivation. To this total should be added 489,423 hectares of wood, raising the total of land under exploitation to 2,704,956. From this total must be deducted, however, 231,693 hectares of waste land. The ground then left for towns, villages, and buildings of all kinds is no more than 240,547 hectares—the hectare being equal to nearly 2½ acres.

Land under Cultivation.

It will give the reader a good idea of the agricultural development of Belgium to specify the principal crops and the area they absorb:—

Crops.

Oats	249,486	hectares
Wheat	275,931	,,
Rye	277,639	,,
Potatoes	199,357	,,
Vegetable Gardens	39,723	,,
Beans	19,088	,,
Beetroot (for sugar)	32,627	,,
Beetroot (for cattle)	26,187	,,
Flax	40,078	,,
Chicory	11,025	,,
Clover (red)	112,488	,,
Clover (white)	33,133	,,
Clover (yellow)	15,198	,,
Orchards	37,947	,,
Meadows and Pastures	351,155	,,
Hops	4,185	,,
Tobacco	1,577	,,
Vine	205	,,

Tobacco is cultivated in the Semois valley, and has a certain vogue for its mildness. The vine is only cultivated in the Meuse valley between Namur and Huy, and is said to be a sort of survival of the Roman occupation. Attention has never been given to it, but there are persons who declare that it might be cultivated on the Meuse, notably at Huy and Dinant, just as successfully as on the Moselle where the vine was also planted for the first time by the Romans.

Woods and Forests.

With regard to the woods and forests the proprietorship is divided between the State, the communes, public bodies and private individuals. The following table shows the proportion in 1880 (the last published) :—

	Hectares
The State	25,309
The Communes	149,672
Public Bodies	4,808
Private Persons	309,634
Total	489,423

It is computed that the sales of wood bring in an annual revenue to all the proprietors of 17,701,875 francs, and that the value of the cuttings for the use of the several proprietors, etc., amounts to 3,931,607, which gives a total return of 21,633,482. Of this total the communes received 4,629,939 and private owners 15,439,836.

Forest Laws.

Of the total area, 203,797 hectares were in 1905 subject to Government inspection under the new Forest Law. Included in this total is the whole of the woods belonging to the communes, and from this later return we ascertain that communal woods had increased from 149,672 hectares in 1880 to 166,641 in 1905. By the law replanting is compulsory to an equal extent with the cutting down, and no cutting down can take place without the prior sanction of the Government Inspector. The principal forests are to be found in the provinces of Luxemburg and Namur.

The agricultural land of Belgium is divided between 231,319 persons working their own land, and 598,306 who rent it. Of the former 117,928, and of the latter 458,120 held land of half a hectare or less. Those who held over one half and under one whole hectare numbered 85,921. Those holding over 100 hectares numbered only 923, and of these 302 were only part proprietors or part renters.

The annual value of the agricultural output for the period 1870–80 (estimated on the average during these years) is put at 1,412,223,989 francs or £56,489,000. The value of the fruit crop is put at 45 million francs, and of the horticultural output at fifteen millions. It is probable that the income derived from the products of glass-houses, seed plantations, and nursery grounds is now more than double that estimated in 1880. Ghent, Bruges and Gembloux are the centres of important and constantly increasing floral settlements, and there are horticultural training schools at Ghent, Vilvorde and Gembloux which grant certificates of competency.

The Agricultural Output.

To the output of the soil has to be added the income derived from animal produce, and what is called " la petite culture." The number of horses employed in agriculture, and of cattle and pigs in the year 1908 is given as follows :—

Animal Produce.

Horses	three years and over	168,545
,,	under three and over one year	50,025
,,	under one year	34,861
,,	foals and fillies	43,647
	Total	297,078
	Deduct deaths and accidents ..	9,413
		287,665

The number of donkeys and mules is small, being only 6,915.

The number of oxen for the same period was	1,861,412
to which add calves of 1908	807,108
	2,668,520
Deduct deaths, natural causes and accidents ..	83,575
	2,584,945

The number of pigs is given at 1,161,761, and of the litters for the year 1,775,321. The loss by death and accident amounted to 237,270. The number of milch cows (in 1880) was 754,093, and of sheep 365,400. There are stated to be

241,045 goats. By the light of these totals the following return of animal produce becomes clearer :—

ANIMAL PRODUCE IN 1880

Hire of animals	65,883,385	francs
Mares (117,396) 88,000 colts and fillies at 200 francs each	17,600,000	,,
Cows,, milk (754,093) 600,000 calves at 20 francs each	12,000,000	,,
Sheep (365,400) 10 francs the fleece ..	3,654,000	,,
Chickens, etc., (2,631,000)	4,615,000	,,
Eggs (3,967,000 hens) 391,132,000 eggs	100,000,000	,,
Milk, 840,000,000 litres	100,000,000	,,
Total	238,752,385	

These figures would now have to be increased by at least 30 per cent., but they are the latest obtainable from official returns, and all others are valueless. The average purchase price of agricultural land in 1895 is given at 2,838 francs for arable and 3,204 for pasture per hectare. These values are in English money £113 10s. 0d. and £128 3s. 6d., which works out at £45 8s. 0d. and £51 5s. 6d. per English acre respectively. The rental value is given as ninety francs and 105 francs per hectare, which works out at twenty-nine shillings and thirty-four shillings per acre respectively.

Markets.

One of the great facilities placed at the disposal of agriculturists, and consequently benefiting the commerce in land and land produce, is the system of weekly and periodical markets prevalent throughout Belgium. It is stated on official authority that the number of markets and fairs held in Belgium is as follows :—

Daily Markets	71
Weekly ,, ...	364
Monthly ,, ...	164
Annual Markets and Fairs ..	731
Irregular periods	394
Total	1,724

THE OLD "BOUCHERIE" ANTWERP

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

Among the most important of the annual fairs is the horse fair at Ciney, which lasts several days. It is hardly known to the English buyer, but the Germans attend it in large numbers, buying many of the Ardennes breed of horse for their artillery.

In recent years great efforts have been made to increase the quantity of fruit under cultivation. Orchards have been extensively planted in Namur and Luxemburg, and apples are reported to show great promise. The mode of planting differs from ours, the trees being placed at considerable intervals in meadows, which furnish pasture for sheep and goats. This system is called "*en verge.*" The forest authorities accept replanting of fruit trees on very favourable terms to the planter in cases of clearing old plantations. There are also a few regular fruit farms, and the consumption of home-made jam is largely increasing.

Fruit Farming.

The cultivation of cereals has greatly increased in the two provinces last named which used to be regarded as incapable of raising crops, to any general extent, owing to their being a land of rocks and stones, but those who took this view overlooked what had been done in the district known as the "*pays de Waes.*" This district lies on the left bank of the Scheldt, north of Ghent. By nature it was a tract of sandy moorland which seemed irreclaimable; but in seventy years the Belgians have succeeded in converting it into the most productive and highly cultivated region in the State. It has been described as an endless market garden and supports an agricultural population of 500 to the square mile. Its capital St. Nicolas and another town called Lokeren are flourishing places with populations of 35,000 and 25,000 respectively.

CHAPTER XV

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

In proportion to the size of her territory and the number of her people the commercial activity of Belgium can only be described as immense. But it is sometimes classed greater than it really is owing to the statistics on the subject requiring explanation. Belgium, owing to its geographical position, forms part of the transport route for goods to and from other countries. The transit charges benefit Belgian railways, but the articles conveyed have nothing to do with either the national resources or the commercial activity of Belgium.

Exports and Imports.

In 1908 Belgium's own exports amounted to about 3,327,000,000 francs or £133,080,000, and her imports to 2,506,400,000 francs or £100,256,000.

These figures represent the true state of Belgian commerce, but in addition it may be stated that the transit trade amounted to 2,021,035,000 francs or £80,841,400. The three largest contribuants to the transit trade in their order of importance were Germany, France and England. The totals were in pounds sterling 28,677,000; 18,217,000 and 8,974,000 respectively. The practical meaning of German preponderance in this particular is that Antwerp is very largely used as an outlet for German commerce.

Returning now to the country's own proper trade we find that in the matter of Imports France comes first, Germany second, and England third; whereas in exports Germany takes the first place, and France only the second. In Imports the United States, Argentina and Holland occupy the next places, the first named being not much below this country. In exports Holland stands fourth, and all the other countries

Increase of Trade.

have only low places. The tabulated statement on pages 130 to 133 shows the progress and development of Belgium's trade with the principal countries of the world compared decade by decade, and ending in 1908. The figures are in thousands of francs.

The principal articles of Belgian trade in respect of exports, confining the list to those reaching a total value of not less than a million pounds sterling in the year 1908, are the following :—

(1)	Foods of all kinds, Vegetables included	265,047,000	francs
(2)	Iron and Steel, manufactured	197,305,000	,,
(3)	Other Metals ,,	153,494,000	,,
(4)	Leather and Hides	123,256,000	,,
(5)	Cotton, Linen, etc.	137,340,000	,,
(6)	Engines and Machines	193,567,000	,,
(7)	Minerals (unwrought)	81,194,000	,,
(8)	Raw material (textiles)	193,150,000	,,
(9)	Raw material (animal)	63,182,000	,,
(10)	Rubber, raw and manufactured	55,235,000	,,
(11)	Arms	26,103,000	,,
(12)	Horses (26,012 in number)	29,741,000	,,
(13)	Paper	32,335,000	,,
(14)	Stone	40,636,000	,,
(15)	Chemicals	57,661,000	,,
(16)	Resin and bitumen	48,614,000	,,
(17)	Tissues	90,985,000	,,
(18)	Glassware	68,895,000	,,
(19)	Dyes and Colours	36,861,000	,,

The exports of coal and coke from Belgium are balanced by a slightly larger import. The exact figures being :—

EXPORTED

Coal,	4,754,000 tons	Value 81,300,000 francs.
Coke,	917,000 tons	,, 22,381,000 ,,

IMPORTED

Coal (including briquettes),	5,589,209 tons	Value	95,848,000 francs
Coke,	287,037 ,,	,,	7,004,000 ,,

The receipts from customs are shown in the following table :—

Year	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1908
Francs	11,104,000	15,761,000	28,561,000	25,608,000	31,766,000	51,182,000	57,327,000

IMPORTS

COUNTRY.	1840.	1850.	1860.	1870.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1908.
Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Zanzibar	185	..	126	1,372	2,094	5,092	5,452	19,738
England	43,649	43,902	82,516	158,812	255,123	212,942	300,856	376,640
Germany	19,880	23,361	51,940	108,319	223,758	182,189	323,890	449,864
Australia	—	—	—	—	—	16,923	37,392	73,574
Austria-Hungary	497	304	552	552	913	2,317	15, 950	13,310
Bremen	—	—	—	—	4,025	—	—	—
Brazil	7,790	5,915	9,813	8,603	18,996	30,503	40,954	35,162
Bulgaria	..	..	..	..	..	4,412	3,518	14,070
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	1,068	11,697	23,678
Cape Colony	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,742	1,628
Chili	—	—	—	—	662	14,360	28,980	68,583
China	..	..	..	..	..	1,636	5,457	17,446
Columbia	..	..	..	60	69	10	302	2,757
Cuba and Porto-Rico	10,571	17,289	8,256	6,068	1,637	626	128	445
Denmark	1,171	469	7,129	5,743	1,296	1,593	1,397	1,656
Egypt	90	285	2,857	596	2,984	4,220	3,435	2,974
Spain	1,444	1,052	4,437	13,950	24,166	21,319	41,334	45,972
Congo	..	..	..	..	..	3,613	46,028	53,343
United States	20,189	20,605	24,155	41,922	270,805	157,022	266,674	341,463
France	39,886	50,589	109,572	233,142	334,823	316,389	375,346	516,739

IMPORTS—*continued*

COUNTRY.	1840.	1850.	1860.	1870.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1908.
Greece and Archipelago	..	37	120	795	1,190	7,943	7,106	9,373
Haiti and Venezuela	4,897	5,880	3,599	5,656	2,077	512	287	1,450
Hamburg	1,557	147	6,660	13,369	17,260	—	—	—
British India	..	..	..	..	..	76,615	39,862	96,068
Dutch India	479	474	326	..	308	1,566	3,008	3,865
Italy	1,207	1,925	2,189	5,342	7,105	19,904	27,123	44,458
Japan	..	..	..	..	..	42	3,491	14,152
Holland	40,164	37,741	101,913	141,446	236,518	206,389	196,382	289,774
Peru	56	894	15,309	22,946	7,742	20,965	1,591	4,277
Philippines	—	136	..	..	67	—	201	3,727
Portugal	1,161	1,769	897	979	2,412	2,375	6,807	8,982
Argentina	775	4,460	41,234	49,707	39,453	74,558	118,563	311,007
Roumania	—	—	—	—	6,504	101,629	73,546	114,338
Russia	7,436	14,284	28,427	43,371	126,658	114,334	125,532	202,299
Sweden	2,046	1,933	8,076	12,034	35,328	46,393	58,296	60,094
Switzerland	—	1,396	1,036	2,654	1,495	2,324	6,496	12,158
Turkish Empire	156	88	2,322	3,712	6,452	4,548	14,398	16,117
Uruguay	—	—	—	30,227	22,521	12,200	11,406	22,819
Other Countries	325	1,415	5,026	9,385	26,451	3,584	11,126	52,733
Total	205,611	236,525	518,487	920,762	1,008,416	1,672,115	2,215,753	3,326,733

EXPORTS

COUNTRY.	1840.	1850.	1860.	1870.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1908.
Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Zanzibar	20	..	33	94	1,289	2,151	4,235	12,298
England	11,082	41,943	95,406	146,612	246,838	267,840	359,054	364,293
Germany	18,612	42,550	61,914	128,274	218,642	265,116	425,564	680,318
Australia	—	—	3	—	86	5,577	13,706	16,511
Austria-Hungary	515	2,477	1,755	1,323	2,780	6,241	11,062	24,340
Bremen	—	—	—	—	636	—	—	—
Brazil	1,045	3,672	4,218	4,083	13,320	15,626	9,337	37,304
Bulgaria	..	..	..	..	..	1,556	358	2,883
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	1,556	15,782	8,405
Cape Colony	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,164	5,967
Chili	—	—	—	—	3,441	8,186	7,643	30,511
China	..	..	..	..	..	8,507	17,230	22,959
Columbia	..	..	..	2	—	147	541	1,276
Cuba and Porto-Rico	2,283	2,121	5,949	7,122	3,859	6,677	2,694	3,996
Denmark	218	651	1,193	1,280	2,829	12,202	7,728	10,354
Egypt	189	143	894	2,808	561	3,481	14,628	20,765
Spain	66	1,873	10,394	4,202	20,027	38,749	36,666	35,345
Congo	..	..	..	..	..	7,352	11,515	16,265
United States	1,974	15,262	9,666	10,657	36,241	50,684	76,861	72,992
France	54,869	74,486	161,750	230,882	399,245	358,691	426,092	464,797

EXPORTS—*continued.*

COUNTRY.	1840.	1850.	1860.	1870.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1908.
Greece and Archipelago .	..	102	410	59	1,354	7,671	4,628	8,991
Haiti and Venezuela . .	1	1	22	..	7	1,126	231	493
Hamburg . . .	12,011	9,919	11,479	10,261	14,629	—	—	—
British India . . .	..	..	..	..	..	9,564	17,594	28,513
Dutch India . . .	719	187	1	5	34	50	3,239	5,406
Italy	970	8,496	8,542	10,874	15,312	34,860	32,121	60,637
Japan	..	..	..	..	..	1,456	11,197	15,176
Holland	29,791	40,078	62,590	82,214	151,171	208,336	217,903	281,794
Peru	7	2,997	5,699	4,217	573	1,206	1,227	1,631
Philippines . . .	..	3	..	9	71	645	698	617
Portugal	37	59	233	67	6,728	16,044	11,536	13,149
Argentina . . .	157	518	4,368	2,567	5,393	17,347	20,939	59,609
Roumania . . .	1,578	5,923	7,831	5,716	3,647	5,414	4,434	11,786
Russia	317	3,396	6,327	22,080	13,220	9,664	31,483	38,231
Sweden	792	1,248	1,625	3,335	8,085	11,190	17,769	23,520
Switzerland . . .	—	930	5,960	9,207	30,387	28,642	30,634	37,011
Turkish Empire . .	—	—	—	—	3,926	14,033	12,297	23,308
Uruguay	—	—	—	667	493	1,311	1,564	3,413
Other Countries . .	2,403	3,753	1,996	1,522	11,908	8,126	58,530	61,580
Total . . .	139,629	263,647	470,258	690,139	1,216,741	1,437,024	1,922,884	2,506,444

Up to 1886 the receipts were on a Free Trade tariff; after that year Protection became the State policy. Wine pays no import duty since 1887. On the other hand, it is subject to a heavy excise, part of which is attributed to the communal revenue. In 1908 the excise brought in a total sum of 114,142,000 francs, of which amount 30,679,000 were handed over to the communes, leaving 83,463,000 francs for the State. The State, therefore, derives nearly six millions sterling from customs and excise, and in addition there is about £1,200,000 for local expenditure from excise.

Change of Tariff.

The following table shows the principal occupations, omitting agriculture, mines, and metal factories already treated of in other chapters, of the population in 1896 which gives the latest classified returns :—

Trade Occupations.

Textiles	169,778	persons
Clothing	137,966	,,
Building	93,577	,,
Food	90,443	,,
Wood, Furniture, etc.	88,457	,,
Hides and Leather	57,702	,,
Conveyance	41,873	,,
Specialised industries	24,435	,,
Glass	22,797	,,
Chemicals	20,715	,,
Book trade	14,049	,,
Tobacco	12,034	,,
Paper	9,448	,,
China Ware	28,977	,,

The hours of labour at these industries range from eight to twelve hours a day. The following table dealing with a total of 504,304 (410,279 men and 94,025 women) shows

Hours of Labour.

	Number
Working 8 hours a day	19,138
,, 8 to 9 ,,	34,741
,, 9 to 10 ,,	172,012

		Number
Working 10 to 10½ hours a day	.. ..	77,854
,, 10½ to 11 ,,	.. ..	88,166
,, 11 to 11½ ,,	.. ..	70,898
,, 11½ to 12 ,,	.. ..	30,951
,, 12 ,,	.. ..	10,544
Total		504,304

The bulk of the industrial population work, therefore, between nine and twelve hours a day.

Public Companies.

Joint-stock Companies in Belgium are regulated by the law of 18th May, 1873, which was modified and amplified by that of 22nd May, 1886. In 1908 there were 1,365 such Companies, and in 1909 the total had increased to 1,500. They are classified in the following list, but the amount of capital invested in them is not stated :—

Assurances	28
Banks and Finance	87
Commercial	499
Industrial	653
Telephone and Electric	24
Shipping	13
Light Railways	1
Tramways	3
Transport	24
Public Works	66
Unspecified	102
	1,500

The industrial population has a higher proportion to the rest in Hainaut than in any of the nine provinces, and stands lowest in Luxemburg and Limburg. The totals in each Province and the ratio to the whole of the industrial class are as follows—those engaged in the mines and factories being included :—

Hainaut	269,300	or 23·83	per cent.
Liége	190,000	or 16·81	,,
Brabant	185,200	or 16·39	,,
East Flanders	171,000	or 15·13	,,
West Flanders	109,500	or 9·69	,,
Antwerp	109,200	or 9·66	,,
Namur	55,800	or 4·94	,,
Luxemburg	20,400	or 1·82	,,
Limburg	19,600	or 1·73	,,
Totals	1,130,000	or 100	per cent.

Commercial Tribunals.

The great commercial activity of Belgium is shown by the heavy work performed by the special courts—Tribunaux de Commerce—dealing with such matters. In 1907-8, the last judicial year dealt with, 59,588 cases were entered for trial, Of these 31,054 were decided by the Courts, 10,981 were struck out, abandoned or arranged, and 17,753 were not reached.

Revenue and Expenditure.

In concluding this chapter it will not be inappropriate to give a brief account of the revenue and expenditure of the Belgian Government. The following table shows how the ordinary revenue has risen from four millions sterling in 1840 to nearly twenty-five millions in 1907. The extraordinary resources on the side of revenue, and the extraordinary expenditure on the side of outlay are also given. They naturally fluctuate to a much greater extent than the ordinary revenue and expenditure, and largely affect the question of a deficit or surplus.

ORDINARY REVENUE IN FRANCS

Years	1840	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1907
	100,558,748	155,612,570	190,537,002	291,921,129	340,525,672	494,105,773	617,808,304

ADD EXTRAORDINARY REVENUE

	68,817,505	14,096,647	14,905,107	102,294,803	37,878,647	48,672,331	90,450,593
Grand Totals :—							
	169,376,253	169,709,217	205,442,109	394,215,932	378,404,319	542,778,104	708,258,897

ORDINARY EXPENDITURE

Years	1840	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1907
	102,840,113	142,880,770	191,843,926	292,009,654	335,236,651	479,055,783	615,237,120

ADD EXTRAORDINARY EXPENDITURE

	63,074,258	16,144,607	25,063,874	90,898,775	82,662,978	95,102,409	152,535,643
Grand Totals :—							
	165,914,371	159,025,377	216,907,800	382,908,429	417,893,629	574,158,192	767,772,763

THE BOURSE, BRUSSELS

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

Sources of Revenue.

By way of comparison between 1840 and 1907 the following were the figures of the principal sources of revenue in francs :—

Sources	1840	1907
Customs	9,850,654	54,492,928
Tand Tax	17,186,459	27,987,220
Patents	2,862,893	14,377,476
Wines (foreign) ..	2,375,615	5,737,643
Spirits (home) ..	2,600,788	42,830,800
Tobacco	nil	2,291,445
Registration ..	8,715,948	36,786,437
Succession Duty ..	3,778,963	23,213,536
Canal and River Tolls	2,210,189	2,086,885
Railways	5,335,167	259,136,808
Telegraphs ..	nil	14,315,503

Spending Departments.

Instituting the same comparison between the principal spending departments we find

Department	1840	1907
Debt service (in francs)	26,639,005	166,883,308
War	30,802,193	74,310,169
Education	4,443,123	(year 1900) 29,333,833
Foreign Affairs ..	1,897,925	4,193,111
Justice	10,467,821	29,901,197
Public Works ..	14,717,455	18,507,447
Railways	8,953,755	218,946,415

Public Debt.

There remains to give some particulars of Belgium's national debt. The first loan was raised in 1832 at 5 per cent., and the following table shows its growth since 1840 :—

1840	1850	1860	1870
255,831,120	611,992,361	634,137,847	682,880,914
1880	1890	1900	1908
1,422,814,049	1,998,043,774	2,650,898,151	3,436,917,850

In addition to this consolidated debt the State issues as occasion requires Treasury Bonds. This floating debt amounted in 1908 to 169,510,000 francs. With the exception of one old loan, bearing only 2½ per cent. interest, the debt is at the uniform rate of 3 per cent. The total indebtedness of Belgium in 1908, therefore, was 3,606,427,850 or £144,257,114. This would have seemed an incredible burden to the Belgians

of 1830 or even 1860. The service of the debt, interest and sinking fund, required 166,883,308 francs or £6,675,332 in 1907. The main asset against the debt apart from the interests of the State is the Railways, which showed a profit to the Government of forty million francs or £1,600,000 in 1907. The price of Belgian Consols in 1908 ranged from 92·25 to 96 per cent., averaging 94. The 2½ per cent. averaged 80·20. Before the Socialist troubles in 1892 Belgian Consols averaged 101 or 102.

In addition to the State debt there is that of the Provinces and Communes. In 1908 this amounted to an existing total of 36,807,723 francs, but between 1830 and 1880 the Communes had borrowed 581,414,670 francs (£23,256,187). As the loans are for short periods and are frequently amortised the provincial debt is in a continuous state of flux and change. A large part of the debt went in the construction of schools after the new Education Act placed their control in the hands of the Communes.

Communal Debts.

CHAPTER XVI

RAILWAYS AND MINES

BELGIUM was the first Continental State to take up a system of railway construction under the auspices of Government.

Commencement of Railways.

Immediately upon his arrival in the country King Leopold I ordered the appointment of a Commission to prepare a plan, and two competent engineers, Messrs. Simons and De Ridder, were entrusted with the task of surveying the country with special reference to such a design. The hostilities with the Dutch and the uncertainty as to Belgium's own future no doubt explained how it was that the elaboration of the plan required three years. The report recommended that Malines should be selected as the central point, and that through it should pass a line north and south from Antwerp to Brussels and Namur, and east and west from Ostend to Bruges, Ghent, Louvain and Liége. The report was adopted, and in May, 1835, the first train ran from Malines to Brussels. In the following year communication was established with Ghent and Liége. M. Charles Rogier was the minister who carried out the King's wishes, and the seventeen speeches he delivered on the subject in a single session contained a remarkable prognostication as to the influence railways would exercise on the development of the country.

Private Lines.

Encouraged by the success of the Government main lines a large number of public companies were formed for the purpose of constructing special local lines that seemed to be needed, and at one time these represented a greater mileage than the State-owned lines, but these, as was always the intention, have, with very few exceptions, been bought up. At the end

of 1908 the distribution of the different lines of railway is shown in the following table, the mileage being approximate :—

	Mileage
Railways built by the State	637
„ built for the State and taken over by it	443
„ built by Private Companies and bought up by the State	1,430
„ worked by the State in conjunction with the Companies	150
Total mileage under State control	2,660

There are also seven small private railway companies with a total mileage of 250 miles, but portions of these lines are on Dutch and French territory.

Cost of Construction.

The total cost of constructing the State-controlled lines is given at a little over one hundred millions sterling, or at the rate of £40,000 per mile. The number of persons employed on these railways was in the year named 70,500, and there were 1,557 stations and minor halts. These are all included in an official guide called the *Indicateur Belge*, or *Guide Officiel*, published three times a year at the price of threepence. This is an admirable publication, and far superior to our own A. B. C. Fares are based on a fixed charge per kilometre, and season-tickets are issued for short or long periods available over the whole of Belgium. The season-tickets bear a photograph of identity and require a deposit of five francs, returnable at the close of the period for which the ticket is taken. The short-term tickets—five or fifteen days—are especially suitable and convenient for tourists. The total number of travellers on all Belgian railways in 1908 was nearly 177 millions.

As the State is responsible for accidents and has to indemnify for death or injury, the following statistics are interesting.

Accidents.

Out of the 177 million passengers in 1908 forty-seven were killed and 1,015 injured. Out of the 70,500 employés fifty-one were killed and 549

injured. In addition to these, seventy-eight persons described as neither travelling at the time of the accident nor employed on the railways were killed and seventy-four wounded. Included in this total were suicides and persons killed at level crossings.

In addition to her heavy railways Belgium is endowed with an extensive system of light railways which have been immensely developed and extended within the last twenty years. In 1890 there were only 705 kilometres constructed, but in 1908 the total had risen to 3,260 kilometres, or nearly 2,040 miles, and each year witnesses the construction of some more of these useful feeders. These light railways, unlike those in England, have proved very profitable as may be seen from a comparison of the receipts and expenditure, the former being 18,991,354 francs as against 13,120,220 for the latter—the working expenses being 69 per cent. of the receipts. The only doubt that may be felt about new undertakings of the kind is whether a sufficient number of them have not been constructed more especially in the Ardennes region.

Light Railways.

Statistics are not available as to the total number of passengers on light railways, but the return of accidents shows among passengers nine killed and seventy-two injured, among employés two killed and ten injured, and among other persons forty-two killed and forty injured. The high number of accidents to outsiders will not be surprising to those who know that these railways are quite unprotected, and that the track passes through woods where it is often difficult to see the train's approach. The trains on these lines are restricted to a speed of sixteen miles an hour. The carriages are small, and each is divided by a glass door into two compartments, one for smokers and the other for non-smokers. The platform at each extremity is available for passengers, and is specially coveted when the route happens to pass through pretty scenery, as is the case between Paliseul and Bouillon.

Limitation of Speed.

The season tickets mentioned above are available also on the majority of the light railways.

One of the sources of Belgium's prosperity is her very considerable mineral wealth, more especially in coal. Coal was known to exist in the province of Hainaut in the eighteenth century and was used locally, but it was not until the Dutch rule was approaching its close that steps were taken to exploit the mines in a serious fashion. The foundation of the Cockerill firm at Seraing in 1820 marked the commencement of the working of the coal-fields in the Meuse valley. It was not, however, until after 1835 that the coal of Hainaut and Liége, and the iron of the region between Sambre and Meuse were worked to any large extent. Statistics for the early phases of the industry are not available, but in 1846 the first General Census showed that 46,186 miners were employed in 202 coal-mines, 21,312 hands were engaged in ironworks numbering 243 distinct enterprises, and 16,000 artisans worked in metals on their own account. The last named were undoubtedly gunsmiths.

Coal-mines.

In 1896, the last census of which full analytical details have been published, the number of persons employed in or in connection with the mines had risen to 128,313, and in iron and steel works to 134,333. Confining our remarks to coal-mines the total of miners of both sexes had risen in 1908 to 145,280. These were classified in the following manner. Working under ground, 99,092 men, 8 women, and 6,653 boys; working above ground, 27,924 men, 5,083 women, 3,481 boys and 3,039 girls. One of the mining reforms in Belgium has been to put an end to female labour under ground. At one time one-eighth of such labour was performed by women. The following totals of women so employed will reveal the progress of this salutary reform effected in the last thirty years—in 1880, 4,714; in 1885, 4,256; in 1890, 3,170; in 1895, 1,268; in 1900, 191; in 1905, 25; and

Number of Miners.

in 1908 only eight. Since 1890, no girls have been employed under ground; in 1880 they numbered 3,262.

In 1835 the total output of Belgian coal is stated to have been 2,638,731 tons, and it fetched at the pit's mouth an average price of 9·50 francs per ton. The following table shows the output and market price extending over a term of years down to 1908:—

Output of Coal.

Year	Output in Tons	Average Price realised per ton in Francs and Centimes
1840	3,929,962	11·79
1850	5,820,588	7·81
1860	9,610,895	11·14
1870	13,697,118	10·86
1875	15,011,331	15·31
1880	16,886,698	10·06
1885	17,437,603	8·87
1890	20,365,960	13·18
1895	20,450,604	9·45
1900	23,462,817	17·41
1905	23,348,320	12·64
1908	23,557,900	16·14

It will be noticed that the total output has remained stationary during the last fifteen years. This is one of the results of the new laws restricting the output at the demand of labour. As the population has continued to increase at an unabated rate it follows that only the increased price paid for coal has averted lower wages or considerable unemployment. The wages earned by each miner (the average including women and children) in 1905 were over twenty per cent. less than in 1900 or 1908. The average annual salary per unit in 1900, 1905 and 1908 respectively was 1,413 francs, 1,147 francs, and 1,417 francs—being in English money, £56 10s. 5d., £45 17s. 7d., and £56 13s. 7d. In fifty years the average wages of the miner have nearly doubled.

The profit to the mine owners in 1905 worked out at eightpence per ton of output, and in 1908 at nearly fourteen pence. This is a very narrow margin to work upon, and when in

1899 the miners of the Borinage threatened to strike for an increase of wages the owners held a great meeting declaring that if this claim were persisted in they would close down. This declaration could not be regarded as an idle statement, for a large proportion of the mines being worked were carried on at a loss. In 1895 forty-five out of a total of 122 in activity showed a loss; in 1900, ten out of 118; in 1905, thirty-nine out of 121; and in 1908, thirty-nine out of 130. In 1908, eighty-nine mines for which concessions were in force were not worked at all.

Small Profits.

Labour is so fully organised on militant lines in Hainaut and the Liége district, and "restriction of the output" has acquired such a firm hold on the men's minds as a first principle that it is not at all likely that the present annual production of a little over twenty-three million tons from existing mines will be much increased. There follows from this fact a consequence that has not presented itself to the intelligence of the labour organisers of Mons and Charleroi. With a fixed output of only twenty-three million tons of coal Belgian industry must halt. It cannot expand beyond its present limits without importing coal at higher prices from its neighbours than would recompense all concerned in the home production as miners or owners, and in this age of cutting prices the difference is sufficient to kill new industries.

Restriction of Output.

Intelligent and far-seeing Belgian men of business took a gloomy view of the outlook raised after the new laws in 1893 and accentuated by the unreasonable demands put forward in 1899; and it was with considerable relief that they learnt, a year or two later, of the possibility of Belgium being endowed with a new coal-field in the region known as the Campine. This tract of country is a barren moorland in the province of Limburg, and the town of Hasselt may be taken as its central point. The discovery that coal could be worked here in

A New Coal-field.

paying quantities was made in the year 1900, but before the State would give the licence to exploit it the question of the rights in new mines had to be discussed in the Chamber, and fresh legislation passed on the subject. A fresh national asset had been revealed, but for a time it looked as if the Government did not know how to deal with it. The rights of the discoverer, the landowner and the State had to be defined, and the miners were propitiated by new laws restricting the hours of labour to eight below ground. It was not till 1909 that all these matters were settled, and the first joint-stock companies were formed to work the new mines. Several shafts have been sunk, and it is understood that the mines are promising although no statistics as to output have yet been published. As to the hours of labour in mines they are now definitively fixed at nine hours from bank to bank and eight hours "at the face."

Other Mines.

Whereas the coal-mines of Belgium, despite the restrictions and limitations referred to, show at least no retrogression, the other mines of Belgium have not realised their earlier promise. This can be best seen from the following table giving the results as to the six principal minerals spread over a term of sixty years.

Mineral.	Year.	1850.	1860.	1870.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1908.
Iron	Quantity (Tons)	299,272	809,176	654,332	253,499	172,291	247,890	188,780
	Value (Frs.)	2,412,769	7,748,633	5,805,452	1,875,000	1,083,000	1,320,100	992,800
Pyrites (Sulphuretted iron)	Quantity (Tons)	4,084	42,513	28,665	7,913	2,980	400	357
	Value (Frs.)	37,062	1,253,109	620,513	164,000	28,000	1,140	2,300
Calamine (Zinc)	Quantity (Tons)	62,193	48,857	41,316	15,735	5,040	3,000	3
	Value (Frs.)	2,996,334	2,123,969	1,619,495	696,000	328,000	217,150	200
Blende	Quantity (Tons)	7,308	17,284	15,783	23,080	10,370	5,715	2,099
	Value (Frs.)	208,474	834,263	807,466	1,546,370	872,000	339,180	150,700
Lead (Galena)	Quantity (Tons)	3,854	9,980	13,380	5,434	150	230	195
	Value (Frs.)	477,775	1,606,228	2,472,616	892,000	15,920	63,280	29,450
Manganese	Quantity (Tons)				700	14,255	10,820	7,130
	Value (Frs.)				4,000	176,000	130,350	124,650

The figures show a marked decline in all forms of mineral productiveness. As recently as 1870 Belgium was a great iron-producing country. It also produced large quantities of zinc and lead. All have diminished, zinc to vanishing point and lead to the output of the primitive mine of Longvilly on the frontier of the Grand Duchy. In the last forty years which have witnessed the decline of the Belgian output the iron-mines of the Vosges and the Grand Duchy have come into existence. When the ironmasters of Liége are approached as to tapping new sources of supply in Belgium they respond, "Why should we trouble? We can get all the iron we want from Lorraine and Luxemburg." Perhaps the most striking proof as to the decline in activity of the mines is furnished by a comparative table of the number of men employed during the years tabulated.

Years	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1908
Total number of workers	5,695	11,141	8,390	3,810	1,427	1,437	855

Apart from coal, mines in Belgium may be regarded as having practically ceased to be productive. How vitally important minerals are for the Belgian working classes may be judged from there being 134,333 men engaged in metal factories, all the material for which, practically speaking, has to be imported.

Accidents.

Accidents in coal-mines in the year 1908 resulted in 133 deaths under ground and twenty-two above ground, and 137 cases of severe injury under ground and thirty-one above. In mines (which in this particular includes quarries) six persons were killed and five seriously injured in the same year.

Quarries.

Belgium is famous for her quarries. The following statistics relate to their development:—

Year	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1908
Number of Quarries	1,412	2,319	1,729	1,701	1,579	1,680
Value of output francs	17,393,574	30,170,657	38,671,999	39,280,000	56,300,380	62,874,600
Number of workmen	17,105	23,662	27,326	31,680	37,281	36,877

Marischal *Rochefort*

RED MARBLE QUARRY OF ST. RÉMY, ROCHEFORT

The quarries are limestone, red sandstone, granite and marble. They are to be found in the Ardennes (Luxemburg), the Condroz district (Meuse Valley), the district between Sambre and Meuse, and parts of Hainaut. The Ambleve valley is remarkable for its red sandstone range. Slate quarries abound in the southern parts of Luxemburg. Lime is largely worked in the valley of the Meuse, and the cement industry is one of the most important in Belgium.

One of the most interesting quarries in Belgium is that of St. Rémy, from which a beautiful red marble is excavated.

Red Marble Quarry.

This quarry has been worked at for centuries, and is still in full use. It originally belonged to the famous Abbey of St. Rémy, which lies about a mile north of the town of Rochefort, and was long the burial place of the Counts of that name who were ruling princes coining their own money. Little of the Abbey remains owing to the ravages of time and of the *sans culottes* in 1795, and the Trappists who had it some years ago contented themselves with using it as a farm and brewery. Lately it has passed into the possession of the Benedictines who are engaged in restoring the Abbey to something approaching its original form. The quarry lies about half a mile north of the Abbey, and has been cut out of the side of the rock. Curiously enough it is only at this particular spot that the marble is found. Many other quarries have been opened in the neighbourhood with the object of penetrating into the same mountain from different sides, but on finding no trace of marble these have, one after another, been abandoned. The quarry which, before the French Revolution, was the property of the monks, has long been worked by a private company. The stone is not merely of a rich colour but is beautifully grained, and has been largely used for the interior decoration of Belgian churches. In 1908 Belgium exported from her quarries of all kinds stone of the weight of 1,477,058 tons of a total value of 40,636,000 francs or about 1,625,500 pounds sterling.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

THE laws of Belgium are contained in a collection called the "*Codes Belges.*" They are a sort of grafting of the old laws of the Nine Provinces on the Code Napoléon which was effected under the charge of a special Commission, appointed after the establishment of national rule. The Commission completed its labours in the year 1835, when the Codes were published. Of course many new laws have been added since, but the principles laid down in the first Statute-book have never been departed from. For instance, capital punishment remains on the Statute, and murderers are still sentenced to death in Belgian Courts, although no one has been executed for over half a century.

The Belgian Code.

We are rather given to say in this country that everything is decided by precedent, but in Belgium the adherence to rule is even more strict. The highest of all the Courts in Belgium, that is the Cour de Cassation, has indeed no other rôle than to supervise judgments, and see how far they conform with the principles and penalties laid down in the Code. Only when a Minister of State has to be tried is the Cour de Cassation used as a Court of open trial. This Court consists of only one judge, who has under him a body of revisors, and the President of the Court enjoys the position of being the best paid judge in Belgium, with a salary of 20,000 francs or £800 per annum. The salaries of the judges is evidence of the low scale on which salaries run in Belgium. A Judge of Appeal gets 10,000 francs or £400 a year. A Judge de Paix, of whom there are 222 in the country, receives from £160 to £220 per annum.

Cour de Cassation.

For civil justice there are three Appeal Courts or groups of courts in the country. They are at Brussels, Ghent and Liége respectively, and dependent on these are the Juge de Paix courts, each of which marks a canton. Reporting to the Brussels Courts are eighty-three cantons, to Ghent sixty-five, and to Liége seventy-four. Immediately under the three Appeal Courts are the Courts of First Instance, in which all civil cases are heard before they can be carried to the Appeal Courts. Statistics show that about one case in eight reaches the Appeal Court. These Courts of First Instance are to be found in all the towns of importance and number twenty-six for the whole kingdom. They are supplemented by tribunals of commerce in Antwerp, Ghent and Liége. In 1908 there were 517 commercial failures and 390 distraints of goods.

Appeal Courts.

The following tables show the work of all the Civil Courts in the two last years reported on :—

COURT OF CASSATION

Year	Cases Entered	Decisions Reversed	Cases Confirmed	Not Reached
1906-7	76	2	34	40
1907-8	86	1	44	41

COURT OF APPEAL

1906-7	3,457	459	1,471	1,527
1907-8	3,206	391	1,366	1,449

The Lower Courts.

Turning now to the Lower Courts we come to the Tribunaux de Première Instance, and there the official return reads :—

Year	Cases Entered	Cases struck out: dismissed and compromised	Cases decided for Plaintiff	Adjourned or not Reached
1906-7	25,068	2,955	7,975	14,138
1907-8	26,481	2,933	8,553	14,995

COURTS OF THE JUGE DE PAIX

Year	Cases Entered	Arranged without formal Judgments	Judgments made
1906-7	141,640	115,574	26,066
1907-8	144,954	118,155	26,709

In the last-mentioned cases the object of the Juge de Paix is to arrange the matter to the satisfaction of everybody, and this explains why 80 per cent. of the cases are settled without a formal judgment being given.

Criminal cases are tried before three orders of courts—Assize, Correctional and Police Courts. The following are the returns for the last two years included in the official annual :—

ASSIZE COURTS

Year	Accused Persons	Acquitted	Sentenced to Death	Life	Imprisonment Period (long)	Period (short)
1907	94	22	5	5	36	26
1908	74	14	5	6	27	22

CORRECTIONAL COURTS

Year	Accused	Acquitted	Imprisoned	Fined	Sent to Reformatory
1907	56,657	9,463	22,869	24,013	312
1908	54,376	8,658	21,938	23,555	225

POLICE COURTS

Year	Persons	Reprimanded or Acquitted	Term of Imprisonment	Fined
1907	171,277	19,627	4,474	147,176
1908	172,406	22,119	3,988	146,299

Here again the same desire to inflict moderate penalties and thus to prevent bad blood between the accusers, the accused and their relations may be discovered in the large number of fines imposed which in the police courts rarely exceed five francs.

Death Sentences.

There has been a marked diminution in the amount of crime in Belgium. Sixty years ago the average number of persons sentenced to death was forty in each year, and they were executed into the bargain. To-day the extreme cases average five a year, but it must be remembered that commutation in these instances does not mean to ordinary imprisonment for life, but to perpetual seclusion and silence.

There are two classes of prisons distinguished as central and secondary. In the former, the principal of which are at Louvain and Ghent, the number of prisoners of both sexes

undergoing a term of imprisonment at the end of 1908 was 734. It is not at all easy to analyse the returns of the secondary prisons through which the great majority pass in and out every few days. The average population on any day in 1908 is given at 3,797 men and 378 women. About 140 boys and girls were detained in reformatories, and there are agricultural colonies for those who are deemed reclaimable. The most noteworthy of these establishments is at Merxplas in the north of Belgium, where the detained, some 2,000 in number, are allowed their liberty within a certain area.

There are two institutions in Belgium of a quasi-judicial character that claim mention. They are the "Depôts de Mendicité" and the "Maisons de Refuge." The distinction is one well worth imitating in this country. The "Maisons de Refuge" are shelters provided for the really deserving poor and "out of work," who through no fault of their own have no home to sleep in, and are in danger of starvation. There is no legal disadvantage or penalty in the eyes of the law in having been the inmate of a "Maison de Refuge." It is for "the wrecks of the high road" and those who have gone under in the battle of life.

Refuges for the Destitute.

It is otherwise with the "Depôts de Mendicité," which are the receptacles for the professional and worthless beggar, the man who has made his livelihood out of begging. The official definition of those consigned to a depôt is "able-bodied individuals who instead of working for their sustenance seek the aid of the charitable as professional beggars, or those who through laziness, drunkenness and debauchery live in a condition of vagabondage." Felons sentenced to less than a year's imprisonment may on release from prison be consigned to a depôt. In plain English the Belgian law differentiates clearly between those in need and those who beg through laziness and aversion to work. The average daily population of the depôts was 5,421 in 1908, and of the Maisons de Refuge 1,279. The student who

Homes for the Idle.

wishes to compare the social condition of different countries may profitably study the returns of our workhouse population in contrast with these figures.

The administration of justice in Belgium cost the country at large in 1907 the following sums :—

	Francs
Department of Minister	732,646
Judicial Body	7,400,354
Cost of Prosecutions and Courts	2,695,262
Up-keep of Palais de Justice	34,521
Official Publications	435,219
Military Justice	151,453
Reformatories	6,059,954
Prisons	3,235,088
Police Expenses	174,109
Exceptional Expenses	1,683,149
	22,601,755

Judges and Barristers.

The judges are chosen from the members of the bar, who are called "avocats" or barristers. They are appointed by the King, are practically irremovable, but in cases of misconduct or mental incapacity can be deprived of their office by the unanimous vote of their brother judges. Such a case does not appear to have arisen.

Barristers are recruited from students who have taken the degree of Doctor of Laws at one of the Universities, and who then notify their intention to plead in the courts. The fees for admission to the bar are little more than nominal. Barristers do not work in the Juge de Paix Courts. Their principal practice is in the Appeal Courts and the Tribunaux de Commerce. On the criminal side they appear in the Assize and Correctional Courts alone. The fees are small, but the leaders in the Appeal Courts receive payments approximating to our own scale. One of the best paid posts open to the bar is that of Procureur du Roi, that is, Crown Prosecutor, and as the work is heavy and the holder of the substantial appointment may be otherwise engaged, he has

the right to name a substitute among his brother barristers. To simplify the transaction of business a list is kept at each court of barristers eligible to act as Procureurs du Roi.

Although a barrister may be instructed by his client direct, and it is usual to do so, there are also solicitors in Belgium. They are called *avoués*. They must have taken a degree in law at one of the Universities, and obtained a diploma authorising them to practise their profession. It is not very easy to understand how the *avoué* obtains a sufficiency of work, seeing that the most profitable functions of the profession are discharged by the "notaire." This may explain why there are so few *avoués* and these only in the most important cities.

The Notaire.

But the notaire is everywhere. He is the indispensable man of business, through whom everyone in Belgium possessing any property at all transacts his or her affairs. His public duties consist exclusively of receiving and confirming affidavits. To that extent he is a Commissioner of Oaths; the civil marriage is also performed in his presence at the Hotel de Ville, or the Maison Communale. But the bulk of his work is done as agent or representative for his clients, and it is very profitable work, the general opinion being that a notaire ought to make a fair retiring fortune in twenty years. Many decayed estates among the provincial noblesse have been restored by marriage with the daughter of a notaire.

The notaire is also the man of business. All sales and purchases of estates and house property are effected through him. He generally keeps the family deeds and securities, and as branches of banks are very rare in Belgium, he is to a large extent the local banker, always it must be understood for his clients alone and not for the public at large. While the notaire discharges certain legal business he is not a man of the law, and holds no legal degree or other qualification. He is a man of business and finance. It is not easy to ascertain the exact number of notaires, but there is at least one for each canton, and in great cities there are, of

course, as many as think they can find a living. As a rule, a Belgian will only go to law after he has first consulted his notaire on the subject at issue. The notaires as a body are highly honourable men, but sometimes the handling of their clients' money induces them to speculate on the bourse, and when they come to grief there is almost as much suffering as arises from the failure of a savings bank here.

The machinery of the law in Belgium for civil actions is simple and far from costly to put in motion. The number of cases entered also proves that the people are by no means averse to litigation, and for some time past complaints have been rife as to the law's delay. The large number of cases not reached at the end of each year is proof that the courts are overworked. This result is tending to diminish the eagerness formerly shown in going to law, and much of the work that now falls on avocats and avoués is done in attempting to arrive at settlements out of court. The only court which shows an increasing amount of business is the divorce court. In Belgium, civil marriage being the legal one, the courts can dissolve the marriage tie without the intervention of the Church.

On the criminal side of justice the tendency is to minimise rather than exaggerate the gravity of an offence. This remark does not apply to the old offender, and it may even be held that he does not get much consideration. To have offended once against the law is regarded almost as proof positive of guilt in regard to any fresh charge. In Belgium every citizen is on the register of the État Civil at the Hotel de Ville of a city, or the Maison Communale of a commune. In addition to this registration all persons employed in domestic service or in shops and restaurants are supplied by the police with a little book called indifferently "livret" or "carnet," in which not merely their names and family history are given, but also all changes of employment. These books have to be shown at the police office with each change of place, and as the last

The Civil Registration.

PALAIS DE JUSTICE, BRUSSELS

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

employer inscribes the reason for leaving, there is a complete history of the individual's life with information as to his or her character. In any dispute or trouble with an employee, the very first question the police agent asks is, "Give me your livret." The servant has a bad time and will be certainly fined if neglect has been shown in keeping up the record.

The Police Force.

The agents de police, who are only to be found in the great cities, are an admirable body of men, and if we omit the qualification of regulating street traffic, in which they have no experience, need not fear comparison with any other civil force in the world. They carry a small sword in a leather sheath, but it is very rarely drawn, practically speaking never in the daytime save on the occasion of Socialist disorders. At night they also carry a revolver, but except in notoriously bad quarters, like the rue Haute in Brussels, armed collisions rarely occur. As all foreigners have to notify their presence in Belgium through their landlords to the police, it naturally follows that criminals from other countries try to evade this regulation, and resort to all possible devices for the purpose.

The police have an ingenious way of running down these evaders of the law. The agents report from their several beats that they have noticed some suspicious-looking persons about whom they did not know by sight. Note is made of the fact at the central bureau, and about the same time information comes, generally from Paris or Lille, that some notorious criminals have disappeared from those places. Thereupon the Brussels police organise a night hunt (it is called a "rafle" or "sweeping off") and in the small hours of the morning they descend upon the drinking and sleeping places favoured by the thieving fraternity, and arrest all those whose papers are not in order, or who, in the case of foreigners, have not a "permis de sejour." In this way many criminals are traced who were not known to be in the country. The agent de police is just as popular with all law-abiding citizens in Belgium as the police are with us, and this is the best proof that

he does not abuse his authority. He never thinks of interfering with the respectable citizen whom he seems to appraise intuitively, but he has the eyes of a lynx for a member of the criminal classes. I have seen instances of this in the Park at Brussels where a great crowd assembles in summer afternoons to hear the music. Hundreds of people will be seated on the chairs under the shade of the trees behind which on a raised terrace is the bandstand. A solitary agent walks up the gravel path at a fair pace. One would imagine his thoughts were with his family and not his work, when suddenly he slackens his pace, looks fixedly at one of the seats, and just raises his little finger. A woman gets up shamefacedly and walks out of the Park. She is a well-known pickpocket, let us say, but perhaps no one else has seen the occurrence. The Brussels "agent" has a fine "flair" for his professional duty, and is very much to be admired in his simple uniform of black broadcloth and smart kepi.

CHAPTER XVIII

LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM

IN one particular modern Belgium presents a striking contrast to the mediæval States that filled its place, and the contrast is in this instance based on progress. The Flemish communes represented the summit of industrial and financial success and prosperity, but theirs was a material and not an intellectual triumph. The age of Van Artevelde disclosed no literary genius. The Burgundian period was sterile in the field of letters, save for a few chroniclers who wrote in French like Froissart and Commines, and whose achievements in the field of letters were done in Paris and not in Ghent or Brussels. It is true that the Flemish Text Society unearthed some mediæval ballads in Flemish, of which no one outside Flanders had ever heard, but these, however interesting and suggestive, could never have been regarded as of sufficient importance to constitute a literature. It is also the fact that Willems thought he had discovered an original Flemish version of the famous Renard le Fox, and trumpeted it abroad as a proof of early Flemish literary genius. A little examination sufficed to show that it was nothing more than a Flemish translation from the French.

Literature.

If the Flemings produced nothing remarkable in the way of literature during their political and industrial prime they certainly did nothing during the three dark centuries that preceded the French occupation to establish a claim to intellectual pre-eminence. They had their schools of rhetoric, in which students were incited to declaim some of the old national ballads and thus save them from dying a natural death by being forgotten. But one fails to find any evidence of

A Sterile Period.

even literary interest. All the energy of the race was absorbed in the effort to keep alive and not to disappear from the family of nations. It is one of the wonders of history that a Belgian nationality, retaining its two component parts in the Flemish and Walloon communities, both at least 1,200 years old, should have survived to emerge as a single and stable State in the nineteenth century. The mind of the race was oppressed with the hard facts of its position; it had no time to indulge in flights of the imagination. The foreign yoke was so overwhelming that neither the patriot nor the poet could raise himself to such a flight of fancy as to imagine deliverance within the range of possibility.

A Striking Revival.

It is consequently all the more remarkable that the attainment of her independence should have been followed in Belgium by one of the most striking literary revivals that Europe witnessed in the nineteenth century. In subjection her voice had not been heard, but on the morrow of her liberation she became articulate. The first manifestation of literary genius came from Flanders. It was no doubt evoked by the aspersion cast on the Flemish tongue by those who assumed too confidently that French would be the language of the new State. Besides the Walloon section of the nation enjoyed the possession of French literature, a satisfying repast for the Belgian public before, in a later generation, it furnished a stimulus to fresh and original exertions of their own.

The Flemish Scott and Byron.

Reference has been made in the chapter on the Flemish Movement to the works of Henri Conscience and Ledeganck, the Walter Scott and Byron as they are called of Flanders. These men of genius proved that, although Flemish might be in the phrase of a French writer "one of those languages that have had troubles," it was still a tongue in which the noblest thoughts of humanity could find expression. Ledeganck, although an ardent Fleming, was intensely national. He was all for the larger Belgium, which included the brother

people. Conscience was more pronouncedly Flemish. He had taken on his shoulders the propagandist rôle bequeathed by Willems, but under his direction Antwerp superseded Ghent as the centre of the movement. Here Conscience founded a school which not merely exists but gives abundant proof of activity to-day. Antwerp even produced its own poet as a rival to Ledeganck in Van Beers, who may be compared to Shelley or Keats. Other leaders of the Antwerp school were Theodore Van Ryswyck (father of the late burgomaster of Antwerp, who was one of the most brilliant of public orators), Pol de Mont and the Sisters Loveling. The last-named ladies were contemporaries of George Eliot and wrote somewhat in her style.

The New School.

It might have been expected that this literary activity would have exhausted itself with the first impressionist movement, and that the leaders would have found no successors capable of giving the movement a fresh impetus. The national spirit that glorified the deeds of the Flemish communes could not but exhaust itself with the recitation of the deeds themselves. They did not admit of repetition. The first writers had appropriated and worked out the subject. Under such conditions it would not have been surprising if the Flemish literary movement, after blazing up, had burnt itself out. It was its striking feature that it experienced a second revival. What Conscience and Ledeganck did in the first phase, Maeterlinck and Verhaeren achieved in the second.

Maurice Maeterlinck, a student and then a professor at Ghent University, revealed himself to the world about twenty-five years ago. He wrote in Flemish, and his theme was not the narrow one of Flemish aspirations but the broad and limitless one of human nature and human passion. Just as the theme was so wide, did he find Flemish too narrow and confined as the implement of his labour. He abandoned Flemish for French, and he left Ghent for Paris, thus

consummating what might be called by his fellow-citizens "the grand treason."

Like Conscience and Ledeganck, Maeterlinck had his affinity and complement in Emile Verhaeren. Twin stars shone together at each epoch in the Flemish firmament. Maeterlinck, as his "Douze Chansons" well proves, indulged his genius in the play of poetry, but was at heart romanticist, philosopher and moralist. Verhaeren, who condescended at times to the use of prose, was essentially poet. In him the Flemish landscape, the bare bleak sea-driven stretch of the dunes, the mirage-like fields of the polders, found their Wordsworth, with more than Wordsworth's force, and a daring in word pictures where he was timid. "Les campagnes hallucinées," "Les vagues des dunes," "Toute la Flandre," will prevent critics from pronouncing dull and uninteresting those lands of Flanders whose mystery he has fathomed and of which he offers the reader the key in his melodious verse, seemingly produced without more effort than a human sigh. But Emile Verhaeren, too, appeals to the wider public he can reach through the medium of the French language. The ambition of the individual in both these illustrious cases has proved too strong for the separatist inclinations of the born Fleming. In literature it is not true to say that it is more satisfying to be king in one's own village than an ordinary citizen of Rome.

Maeterlinck and Verhaeren.

If the Flemings provided what may be called the first sensations in Belgian literary activity, the Walloon movement which followed at an interval, has been scarcely less significant or meritorious. The Walloon writers of the three troubled periods —the Brabant Revolution of 1789, the transition period after the fall of the Empire in 1814, and the Belgian Revolution of 1830–1—were among the most prolific and active pamphleteers that have ever been known. "Shoot me some of those pamphleteers," exclaimed an irritated Austrian Minister

The Walloon Movement.

in 1789, and it would be difficult to discover a publicist who did more in preparing a revolution with the pen than Louis de Potter before 1830. The pamphleteer is only the historian in embryo whose mission will not allow of his waiting to write *in extenso*. It was, therefore, only natural that the establishment of peace should be followed by a marked development of historical study, elucidation and description. There was a natural explanation for this. Belgium had just been born, but although a new kingdom it was an old country, and history had to be searched and described to explain the tardiness of its birth. It was under these circumstances that Gachard, Schayes, T. Juste, Kervyn de Lettenhove, Villenfagne, and others too numerous to name, explored the recesses of Belgian history, and set forth the sad national experiences of the hardest treated race in Western Europe. Vanderkindère, one of the latest and the ablest of these searchers after truth, has informed his countrymen in a bitter sentence that they could not expect to come back from those wanderings in subterranean regions without some of their plumage being burnt, and something of their pristine virtue left behind.

If Flemish writers produced the romance and poetry of the nation, it was the French-speaking community that provided the historians, the political writers and the scientists. They were a band of highly meritorious scholars and teachers, although none reached the higher level of genius. They had none of the stimulus provided by a definite mission of political or racial propaganda. Their principal object was to unearth historical documents, to group them in a harmonious whole, so as to convince the world that Belgium had existed with an almost unbroken thread of national life from the olden time. Their subject alone was interesting in their eyes. It never occurred to them that there was need to establish the superiority of prose set down in French to that expressed in Flemish, or to prove the greater fertility of Walloon intellect to that of the men of Flanders. The idea of comparison, competition and contrast never entered their minds.

But the Flemish movement had always been aggressive in its character, and it was scarcely surprising that the productions of several men whose real genius could not be challenged in any assembly of intellect, should have imparted some measure of arrogance to the Flemish attitude towards the other race in the Union. It became a favourite phrase in the Flemish papers to declare that the Walloon intellect was sterile, and that it was satisfied to let France provide it with such literature as it might require. The Flemish attitude was provocative and a challenge. It gave rise to the Walloon movement which, in its way, has proved as remarkable as the Flemish, and may still be regarded as in the full swing of its vigour.

The Walloon movement has been double-winged. There has been a general effort, and it is still in progress, to preserve and revive the Walloon tongue which is as old as the Flemish, and which was in use at the Court of Pepin and probably of Charlemagne. The other side of the movement has been to enrich French literature by the great achievements of more than a few Walloon writers. Liége, the capital of Wallonia, took the lead in this movement just as naturally as Ghent and Antwerp had done in regard to the Flemish. Defrecheux and Vrindts supplied the Walloons with the popular ballads that the Flemings found in Ledeganck and Van Beers. More even than their Flemish colleagues are these singers the poets of the people. The poems of Vrindts, for instance, give in epitome the life of the stout Walloon race which has preserved its national characteristics amid the rivalry of the Empires by which Liége was surrounded.

The Walloon Tongue.

While the movement at Liége remained pre-eminently and distinctively Walloon, the second branch of the reaction against Flemish arrogance and aggression concentrated its forces in Brussels. The Belgian capital became the centre of the revival of national literature, expressed in the French

The French Movement.

tongue. The movement cannot be traced here in all its details. The first writers like Van Hasselt were swayed by the influence of Victor Hugo. The second and more numerous group, of which Camille Lemonnier, Georges Rodenbach and Edmond Picard were the bright and particular stars, were largely influenced by the naturalistic tendencies of the modern French school. Poets such as Giraud, Gilkin, Mockel and Severin have proved that the Belgian mind can soar to the heights of Parnassus, while M. Chainaye, a strenuous fighter against the aggressions of the "Mouvement Flamingant," has gone to the root of things in his "L'Âme des Choses." M. Maurice Wilmotte, less partisan than Chainaye, has taken his place as a leader of the French movement by his captivating sketch of the moral and political aspects of independent Belgium.

Of all these writers, however, one alone, it may be admitted, has passed the final test of literary fame, the acquisition of an European reputation, Camille Lemonnier. He is one of the finest stylists in any language, and his prose reads with the lilt of a song. For that reason translations of his best works are impossible. Those that have been attempted read harsh, and his metaphors defy transference to another scene. This is especially the case in his description of the Borinage and in his great novel "Le Mâle." The brutalities and coarseness of industrial life have never been brought out with a bolder hand, while behind them are portrayed the blurred features of our common humanity. Walloon as he is, Lemonnier has done full justice to Flanders in his "Contes Flamandes" and his monumental sketch of "La Belgique" which developed out of his contributions to *Le Monde Illustré*. Enough has been done by this chosen band of "Young Belgium" to show that there is no truth in the Flemish aspersion as to the sterility of Walloon intellect; and it may even be predicted that the French revival in Belgium, having a wider audience, is likely to prove more enduring than the Flemish. Some

Camille Lemonnier.

proof of this might be found in the abandoning of Flemish for French by the two leading writers of Flanders.

Belgian Press.

Belgium possesses a very active and influential press. The papers published at Antwerp and Ghent are printed in Flemish and those in Brussels, Liége and Louvain in French. Of course there are a few French papers in Flanders and a few Flemish in Brussels, but the rule is as mentioned. The principal rôle of each paper is to advocate the cause of the political party to which it adheres, and the original matter is confined to political propaganda. Political views in Belgium are extreme—there is no Central Party—and the press does not lag behind the demagogue in giving the freest vent to vituperation of the adversary. The rival party is denounced as devoid of all virtue, and as no moderation is expected from the other side, it is deemed weak to display it oneself. When the Belgian journalist becomes tired of attacking his own countrymen he relieves his feelings by criticising the people of other countries. The Second Empire was one of its favourite butts, so was England during the South African War. But during the last two years there has been evidence of greater restraint. The general European situation has inspired anxiety, and Belgian publicists have displayed a proper sense of their higher duties and responsibilities.

Belgian Papers.

In Brussels there are several excellent dailies. The *Indépendance Belge*, the *Journal de Bruxelles*, and the *Étoile Belge*, are all first-class papers to which able writers contribute. They also receive official information, and endeavour to instruct their readers as well as to promote the cause of the political party to which they are attached. M. Roland de Marès of the *Indépendance* is a publicist of European reputation. Among specialist papers the military weekly, *La Belgique Militaire*, takes a foremost place. Under the able editorship of M. Léon Chomé, it has advocated the cause of army reform during the last thirty years, and is entitled to much of the credit for

the changes recently brought about in the system of army recruitment.

The periodical press is of a somewhat spasmodic character. An incident or the commencement of a commercial movement will be heralded by the production of an illustrated journal or magazine, and for a time a very interesting periodical appears. The incident passes off, the movement fizzles out, whereupon the publication is dropped. Such was the case of *La Chine et Sibérie* a few years back. The Congolese publications have also diminished in number. Among all the periodicals the most valuable is the Journal of the Royal Society of Belgium. In this have appeared the best works of historical writers like Gachard, Pirenne, Borchgrave, etc.

Clubs.

Closely connected with literature and journalism is the literary club. In Brussels there is a rather exclusive club located in the Park (near Vauxhall) known as the "Cercle Artistique et Littéraire," but beyond allowing an occasional conference or exhibition of pictures in its rooms it does not take a very active part in promoting either the status or the interests of literature. The Cercle Africain, held at the picturesque Hotel Ravenstein, is nominally intended for the use of those who have served in Africa, but it has a literary side also, and is the centre of the propagandist movement in Colonial matters which finds expression in the *Congo Illustré*. As a rule, however, *cercles* or clubs meet at their chosen restaurant, and in this sense there is scarcely a town in Belgium without its little society. It would be more correct to say that each town has two rival "cercles," the Catholic and the Liberal, thus reflecting in social life the political divisions of the State.

CHAPTER XIX

MUSIC, ART, AND THE DRAMA

WHATEVER else he may be or may not be the Belgian is intensely fond of music. Concerts are the most popular form of entertainment. There is not a commune that does not keep up a band or rather two, for there are pretty certain to be rival Catholic and Liberal bands wherever one goes, and in no other country are greater facilities provided by the Government for those desirous of studying vocal or instrumental music in any form. There seems to be an average of not fewer than 20,000 permanent students passing through the conservatoires at any given time. State help is given to these institutions because public opinion demands it, and not with the object of spreading a love of music. The love of music is a national trait. The Government is, therefore, expected to provide those who wish to earn their living by the profession with the suitable means and facilities of becoming experts and *virtuosi*.

Belgium, a Musical State.

The four royal conservatoires are situated in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and Liége. Each institution is divided into classes covering the whole range of harmony, and at Antwerp and Ghent there are separate classes for French and Flemish declamation. The following table shows the total of inscribed students at each of these institutions in 1908 :—

Name	Male Students	Female Students	Total
Antwerp	.. 949	978	1,927
Brussels	.. 481	405	886
Ghent	.. 580	601	1,181
Liége	.. 742	461	1,203
		Grand Total	5,197

In addition to the four royal conservatoires there are sixty-five other conservatoires and schools of music in the country. Of these fifty-six are in Hainaut, Brabant and Flanders. The total of inscribed students was 14,115 (7,033 males and 7,082 females). Among the famous musicians turned out by the Belgian schools of music may be named César Franck and Ysaye, whose reputations are European. The chief merit lies, however, in turning out annually a large number of qualified musicians of all kinds whose influence on the life of the country and the character of its people is not inconsiderable.

Schools of Music.

The opera is very popular in Brussels, and has a particularly long season at the Theatre de la Monnaie. During the three months that the opera house is closed the orchestra plays in the open air every evening at Vauxhall, in the Bois, except when it rains. The conductors are doctors of music who have qualified at one of the royal conservatoires, and the orchestra is now recruited exclusively from the national schools of music. There are fine concert halls in Brussels besides the hall of the Conservatoire, which is situated in the rue de la Régence. One of these is in the room called La Grande Harmonie, at the top of the rue de la Madeleine. Great interest is taken in the competition among the students of the Conservatoires, but on these occasions only the parents or other near relatives to the number of two apiece are allowed to be present to hear the *concours* at which the relative merit of the student is announced. At the repetition, however, it is possible for outsiders to be present, and the search for new talent is not the least practical errand of the visitors who include many impresarios.

The Opera.

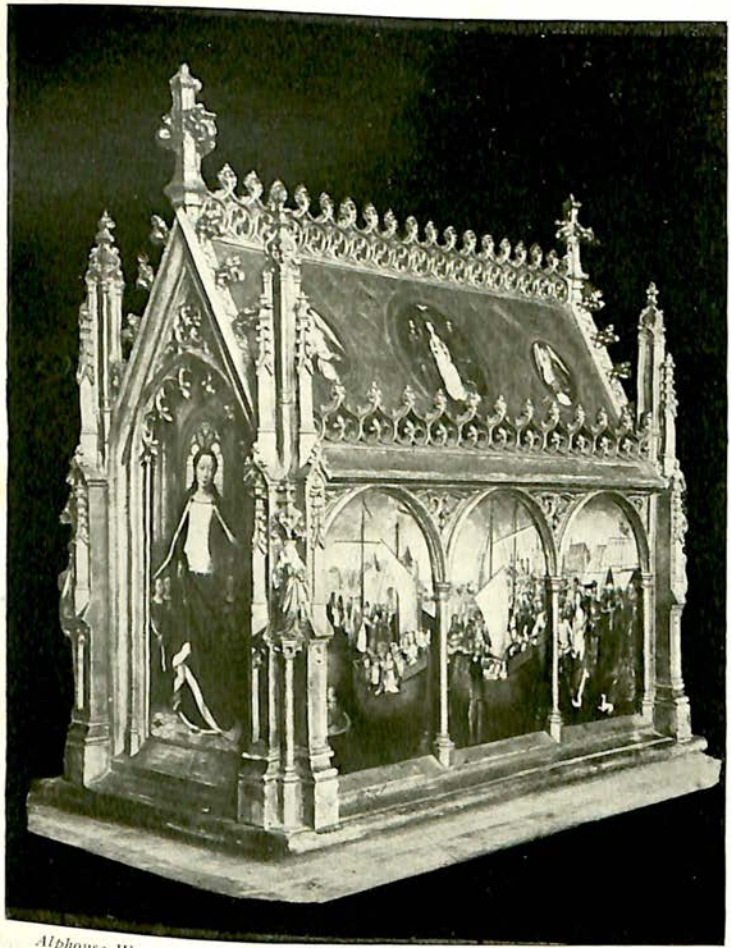
Great pride is taken in organising the communal bands which are composed of trained musicians. They are called out to attend the funeral of any prominent resident, and in the smaller communes any funeral, provided the deceased

belonged to the right political party. They thus acquire special skill and harmony in Handel's or Chopin's funeral march. On fête days and national holidays they play popular music in the principal square or "Grand Place," winding up with the national anthem of La Brabançonne. The military bands are also first rate, especially those of the two Guide Cavalry regiments, which are always quartered in Brussels. One of these bands plays in the park every afternoon during the summer. The city band of Brussels also plays there, and throughout the country similar arrangements are carried out in all the garrison towns. Whatever shortcomings he may note, the visitor to Brussels and Belgium will have no reason to complain of a lack of good music. The audience at the Monnaie, while retaining their right to criticism are particularly susceptible to the claims of new-comers of evident talent, and many a famous prima donna dates her first European success from the acclamations of a Belgian audience in their historic theatre. The Belgian revolution of 1830 originated with the ebullition of popular enthusiasm aroused by Massanniello's famous song invocating the spirit of patriotism.

Communal Bands.

Art not less than music enjoys official support. The principal institution for the cultivation of the Fine Arts finds its home naturally enough at Antwerp associated with the memories of Rubens and Vandyke. This is styled the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and dates from the year 1850. All the well-known artists of Belgium in the last half-century have passed through this Academy, and many others as well who have not followed their profession in Belgium. Among the latter the most distinguished is our great artist, Sir L. Alma-Tadema. So far as mere numbers go the institution reached its prime in 1880, when there were as many as 1,692 students as compared with 941 in 1908. The decline seems the more considerable when it is stated that female students were admitted for the first time in 1890.

Antwerp School of Art.



Alphonse Watteyne *Bruges*

RELIQUARY OF ST. URSULA, HÔPITAL ST. JEAN, BRUGES

Besides the Royal Academy of Antwerp there were eighty-six drawing academies and schools in the kingdom attended by 16,137 students of both sexes. Many of these students are trained as architects, gilders, engravers, etc., as well as those who enter the courses of drawing and painting. There was even a class of naval architects at Antwerp, but this was given up in 1885. So far as the different fine art exhibitions allow of an opinion to be formed from the total numbers of exhibitors there were about 600 painters of the male sex and 100 of the female actively practising their profession as artist-painters in 1903.

The Modern School.

The modern school in Belgium dating from 1835 was chiefly historical. Impressed by the events of the period of liberation the artists found their inspiration in the incidents of Netherlands' history. Biefve, Gallait, De Keyser were the leaders in the revival of Belgian art, and their historical works are to be found on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art in Brussels. But the interest of such works soon passed off, and for a time Belgian art languished or waned in the choice of a new bent. After some uncertainty a new school of landscape painters, racy of the soil, has come into existence making present-day Belgian art a real and living fact. Instead of our own it will be best to give M. Edmond Picard's views on the development of modern Belgian art. They are set forth in the following passage which is taken from one of his lively causeries on "the artistic psychology of Belgium." We may only pretend to give M. Picard's sense and not his style, which baffles the translator's efforts.

M. Picard's Opinion.

"In order to be the artist, to transform one's impressions into the beautiful, it is necessary before everything to be true to one's own home and surroundings; art must be impregnated with national thought, ambition and tendencies. At the beginning of our history Belgium had no national soul, because the sense of a nationality did not exist. Across that land of mist,

where each knew not his neighbour unless it was to combat him, there bloomed no flower of idealism. Whilst in the Greek and Roman civilisations gods walked on earth, whilst Paganism gave free vent to its streams of eternal beauty, with us all was void. The night, during which intellect with us slept, began to break about the year 1000, when in churches and monasteries the æsthetic awakening was revealed by barbarous and coarse decoration and constructive work which were still expressive of the Roman art. Out of this sprang Gothic art which in emotional force, if not in the power of its harmonious beauty, surpassed Greek art itself. With the House of Burgundy appeared the first form of national unity, thus really creating Belgium, and thenceforth national sentiment found its noblest expression in an independent and original art. The national soul is manifested with striking intensity in the works of Memling and Van Eyck, in which may be found across the centuries the same characteristics as are observable in our art to-day—the love of the picturesque, the research in detail, the desire to provoke emotion. After the House of Burgundy came the eclipse of our individuality, and with it of our art—the eclipse lasted during nearly three centuries. It may be objected that the reign of Albert and Isabella saw the striking genius of Rubens. But Rubens was not Belgian. He was one of those supernatural men like Shakespeare and Michael Angelo who, when they disappear, leave all in darkness after them. And then we arrive at the day of our independence. At first our artists seek to follow in the track of Rubens and we get the mediocre productions of de Keyser and Slingeneyer. But other artists rose with the courage to look about them. It is in landscape, in the representation of the native soil that the renaissance begins; Artan, Boulenger, Baron and a crowd of others who scatter over their works the light whose marvellous beauty they have appreciated. Then came that great artist Constantin Meunier, whom we may describe as of the school of Quentin Metsys, Laermans who may be compared to Breughel,

Alfred Stevens and De Groux to Vermeer and Snyders. All these have created for us a new, striking and vigorous art because they realised that it must be not merely beautiful but true to our national and familiar life."

Sculptors.

Modern Belgium can boast of having produced some very fine sculptors, among the principal being Eugène Simonis, the brothers Geefs, Jehoth, Fraikin, and more recently Jacques de Lalaing. The finest product of the art of a Belgian sculptor is undoubtedly the colossal equestrian statue of Godfrey of Bouillon, which occupies the centre of the Place Royale. The British Waterloo monument in the Evère cemetery may be mentioned as an original piece of work due to the talent of Count J. de Lalaing.

There is no national theatre in Belgium as in France, and up to the present time no special training school for the stage has been established. The utmost that has been done in any form of State aid, and that under the pressure of the Flemish party, has been the building of special theatres for Flemish plays at Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels. After the Monnaie, which has been referred to as the house for opera, the principal theatres in Brussels are the Parc, the Molière, the Galléries, and the Alhambra. The most fashionable of them is the Parc, where it is usual to give the latest success from Paris with French actors and actresses. Classical plays are given from time to time, and matinées of plays to which young ladies can be taken have recently become the vogue.

Theatres.

If the Parc is the playhouse for society, the Molière, which is also a house for French plays, appeals to a more general public. The theatres in the lower town go in for light comedy, operetta, and burlesque. Their greatest successes are scored when they put on the boards a "risky" piece like "La Dame de chez Maxim." Its success was phenomenal, not greater, however, than that of the drama "Cyrano de Bergerac." If there

is a national school of actors in the French tongue it is still largely in the making, and the Belgian stage must be described as cosmopolitan with a majority of the performers claiming French birth.

It is, of course, different with the Flemish theatres, where the company is necessarily exclusively Belgian. But the Flemish theatres can boast of no large repertoire, and the heroic popular play of "Uylenspiegel" was written originally in French by its author, Charles de Coster. It is, however, a sure draw with the Flemings, for it deals with the heroic period of the communes, and is frequently put on the stage. As a drama it somewhat resembles the "Dead Heart," but the most remarkable point about it is the opportunity it affords of studying a Flemish audience. The royal theatre at Antwerp is used as both an opera-house and for plays, but here the language used is French. It resembles the Monnaie with the exception that its season is shorter—September to April—and that it only opens its doors on certain days in the week. The most fashionable audience collects for the Sunday matinées. The Antwerp citizens are more staid than those of Brussels, and their dramatic fare has to be selected accordingly. The Flemish Theatre, known as the Schouwburg, may be described as the home of Flemish drama, and sometimes Flemish translations of Shakespeare's plays are put on the stage. At Ghent there is another Flemish Theatre also called the Schouwburg, which resembles in character those already described. Near it is the French theatre, but its season is short and, as a rule, it only opens its doors twice or thrice a week.

CHAPTER XX

CANALS AND WATERWAYS

ALTHOUGH canals in Belgium are not so obtrusive as they are in Holland yet they are far more important and numerous than the visitor to the country might imagine. The question of the internal waterways, which may be subdivided into rivers, canalised rivers and canals, of the country has always been of national import. The guilds of the watermen (*bateliers*) were, in the days of the communes, among the most important at Ypres, Bruges, and Ghent; it was on a matter of rivalry between their boatmen that Ghent fell upon Ypres and shattered its power in 1383. At the present time, despite the advent of railways, communication by water is of the greatest value to the economic system of Belgium, and a new policy has been inaugurated of constructing new ship-canals or enlarging old ones for the passage of ocean steamers into the heart of the country.

National Canals.

The rivers used as waterways for commerce are the Meuse, the Scheldt, the Lys, the Dendre, and the Dyle. The importance of the Scheldt may be judged from the fact that three great cities, Antwerp, Ghent, and Tournai, are situated upon it and that boats paid toll on it at Tournai in the tenth century. The Meuse, the Lys and the Dendre have been canalised in different parts of their courses and the question of the more effective control of the Meuse below Maestricht is one in which the Belgian public apparently takes more interest than the Dutch. Further reference will be made to this matter.

Principal Rivers.

In the official list kept in the office of the "*Ponts et Chaussées*" fifty-two separate canal systems are recognised among the national waterways. They have a total length of 1,637

kilometres, or a little over 1,020 miles. The total tonnage of goods carried by ordinary boats on these waterways in 1908 reached the enormous total of 1,111,773,961 tons. Of this only a small part related to foreign countries. The imports into Belgium by water in the same year amounted to 6,228,815 tons and the exports to 7,128,390.

Belgian Canals.

In addition to the fifty-two canals, etc., enumerated there are five ship-canals, viz. :—

	Length in Kilometres	Tonnage
Brussels to the Rupel	27·3	4,807,029
Ghent, Bruges, Ostend	23·3	267,723
Ghent to Terneuzen	17·5	22,898,308
Louvain to the Dyle	30·6	8,280
Bruges to Zeebrugge	16	475,810
	114·7	28,457,150

These figures establish the importance to Belgium of her canals and river-ways. Canal life in Holland is a more picturesque affair than in Belgium, but it may be questioned whether the amount of traffic is as great in the Northern Netherlands as it has become in the Southern. The following are the details of the goods conveyed by the internal canals :—

Combustibles	319,656,095	tons
Minerals, etc.	108,881,739	,,
Building Materials and Metals	211,016,193	,,
China and Glass	88,066,579	,,
Wood	36,191,028	,,
Agricultural Produce ..	165,146,470	,,
Industrial Produce	52,004,753	,,
Merchandise	130,811,104	,,
Total	1,111,773,961	,,

In 1908 the ordinary expenses on canals and waterways amounted to 2,386,172 francs, and the receipts from tolls to 2,097,598 francs. But in 1907 and 1908 a capital expenditure of nearly two millions sterling on the improvement of

canals and rivers as waterways was sanctioned. This shows the importance attached to their development, and the following table of the sums expended on the different water routes gives a more or less correct idea of their relative importance :—

Canal or River-way	Capital Expenditure in 1907–8
Scheldt (Antwerp) New Installation	8,174,260
,, Improvement below Antwerp	6,848,850
Canal Charleroi-Brussels	4,991,156
Ghent-Terneuzen	4,750,286
Zeebrugge-Bruges	2,938,675
Meuse and Scheldt Junction	2,845,216
Lys river	2,685,835
Ghent-Ostend	1,683,326
Ostend port	1,568,154
Meuse	1,126,779
Coast Defences	1,206,448

The closing item, " coast defences," shows that the defence of Belgium against sea encroachment is scarcely less artificial than in the case of Holland.

Antiquity of Canal System.

It was Drusus, it will be recollected, who first introduced a system of canalisation into the Netherlands by giving a new arm to the Rhine, and there is evidence that the canals from Ostend to Bruges, with a prolongation towards Ghent, and from Brussels to the Rupel and the Scheldt, existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. When Charles of Lorraine completed the Bruges-Ghent canal 150 years ago, it was especially recorded that it had been commenced in 1379. When the Willebroek canal was enlarged in the sixteenth century, it enabled William the Silent to perform the whole journey by water from Antwerp to Brussels. In mediæval Flanders the Lys provided Ghent with a natural water route to Courtrai and, incidentally, to Ypres as well, and the Scheldt one to Audenarde and Tournai. Further east the Dender connected Termonde with Alost and Grammont, while the Ruppel and the Senne linked Brussels with the Scheldt.

The Meuse.

In many respects the Meuse, which is partly a French and partly a Dutch river, is the most important of all Belgian waterways. In its upper course it is linked with some of the most important French canals (the canal des Ardennes among others) giving access to the heart of the old provinces of Champagne, Lorraine and Burgundy. The wine of these provinces is imported by water the whole way to Dinant, Namur, and Liége, and this mode of conveyance explains why the wines of Burgundy have always been especially excellent in Belgium. There is another reason for the superexcellence of Burgundy in the Meuse valley. The cellars are cut in the rock, and at certain seasons of the year when the river is in flood the water is admitted, and when the tide falls it leaves the bottles clothed in mud which is said to invest them with a special and stimulating protection. In old days wine and wood were the principal articles conveyed on the Meuse, but since 1880 the most important import has been iron from the famous iron-field of the Vosges. This is sent direct to Liége, or branches off at Namur to proceed up the Sambre to Charleroi. Thanks to this cheap water conveyance French iron competes successfully with that from Germany or the Grand Duchy, which can only reach the Liége market after a more or less costly railway journey. Since the exhaustion of the home iron-mines between the Sambre and Meuse, Belgium has been entirely dependent on the supply from foreign sources and cheap transport necessarily forms an important point in the degree of profit with which this mineral can be utilised.

The most important question relating to the Meuse is as to the possibility of establishing communication for ocean steamers to as high up as Liége. This is rather a Belgian grievance, as the Dutch authorities have been accused of apathy and indifference. The matter requires a little careful consideration.

When it became clear, after the Belgian Revolution, that

Dutch rule was ended in what used to be called the Spanish Netherlands, the Dutch clung to the possession of the town of Maestricht for sentimental reasons as the scene of the heroism of their race, and the indulgent Powers accepted and supported the claim. Maestricht is, however, of not the slightest practical value to Holland. At the same time that Maestricht was left to the Dutch the part of Limburg lying on the right bank of the Meuse was ceded to Holland as compensation for what it lost in Luxemburg. This, roughly speaking, consists of the cantons of Sittard and Ruremonde. While these cessions of territory were made for the benefit of Holland it was expressly laid down that the use of all canals was to be free and common for both countries. It may be useful to quote the precise stipulations of the treaty, for this question of the Middle Meuse is very likely to become important if only for the interesting and difficult engineering problems connected with it. The following is the text of the special Articles relating to the matter :—

Maestricht.

"Art. 10.—The use of the canals which traverse simultaneously both countries shall continue to be free and common to their inhabitants. It is understood that the enjoyment thereof shall be reciprocal, and on the same conditions, and that on both sides there will be on the canals only moderate navigation-dues. Art. 11.—Commercial communications by way of the town of Maestricht and that of Sittard shall remain entirely free and shall not be impeded on any pretext whatsoever."

The importance of this strip of Dutch territory to Belgium is that it intercepts Belgian communications with Germany, while Holland is bound not to impose more than moderate tolls on goods passing to and from Germany by either road or canal. The most important canal in the region is the South William Canal which connects Maestricht with Bois le Duc, passing through a certain portion of Belgian territory. This canal

Meuse Navigation.

is used chiefly because it saves the wide bend of the Meuse by Venlo, but if the Meuse itself were canalised below Visé there is no doubt that Belgian traffic would favour the main river.

At the present time Venlo marks the limit of up-stream navigation for steamers. There is a regular daily packet from Rotterdam to this place, but the Dutch have made no attempt to improve the river above that town for the reason as they admit that it would benefit Liége. In anticipation of something being done by the Dutch the Belgians have canalised the Meuse below Liége to the frontier at Visé, and expend a certain sum annually in its up-keep by dredging. But the state of the river below Visé has rendered this a useless expense. Small pleasure steamers ply in the summer between Liége and Maestricht as they do above Namur to Dinant and Waulsort, but these have no commercial value.

Ruremonde.

Belgium's possession of the left bank of the Meuse, interrupted by the enclave of Maestricht, continues below the circumference of that town to a point almost equidistant between Masseyck and Ruremonde. The whole of this strip of the Meuse of which Holland holds the right bank, is uncanalised and of no use to commerce beyond what may be conveyed in barges. Moreover, the river in flood is dangerous for navigation even by them, and between Ruremonde and Venlo, where Holland holds both banks, the floods are aggravated by the addition of the equally uncontrolled waters of the river Roer, which flows into the Meuse at Ruremonde. Both the Belgians and the Dutch citizens of Limburg consider it a grievance that nothing has been done in this matter and lay the chief blame at the door of the Hague Government. The people of Ruremonde in particular grumble a good deal because it is impossible for excursion steamers to come as high as that place. It would be different, they have been heard to say, if we belonged to Belgium.

A Dutch-Belgian commission has, however, been considering

Rijnders *Ruremonde*

MEUSE BRIDGE, RUREMONDE

the question of late, and something may soon be done. The Belgian Government is quite prepared to undertake its share of the work and the expenditure, and that of Holland without committing itself has recently displayed more interest than it has ever done on any former occasion. The canalisation of the Meuse between Visé and Venlo would no doubt be a costly affair, but the reclamation of the land now subject to inundation would go far towards meeting the whole expenditure.

Another great question with regard to the improvement of Belgian waterways is that of rectifying the course of the Scheldt just below Antwerp. The river here takes a wide sweep to the westwards, and it has been proposed to obviate this by cutting a new bed for the river across the neck of the promontory. This scheme is known as "*la grande coupure*," and has had as many opponents as supporters. But there seems no reason for doubting that it is practically decided on, and that as soon as the removal of the *enceinte*, now in progress, has been effected this task will be taken in hand. No other hypothesis will explain the postponement of work on the two forts intended to defend the river approach to the great city. The adoption of the "*grande coupure*" will not merely give a direct entrance to the existing quays (thus saving a curve of at least six miles) but it will also allow of their extension northwards for a distance of two miles. It must also be remembered that the lower Scheldt is in a special degree liable to visitations of fog, and the straighter the river course becomes the more is the risk of accident diminished. For the moment the weak point in the defences of Antwerp is to be found on the side of approach from the sea owing to the deferred settlement of the "*grande coupure*" problem.

The Scheldt.

The reported intention of the Dutch Government to fortify the mouth of the Scheldt at Flushing has raised considerable discussion in Belgium, where the Scheldt is regarded as essentially a Belgian river. In 1831-9 Europe very foolishly gave

Holland both banks of the Scheldt from a short distance below Lillo, but at the same time it established the common rights (that is to say joint and equal) of Belgium and Holland in the navigation of the river. A Dutch fortress at the mouth of the river might seriously interfere with and, indeed, close the access to Antwerp from the sea. Under certain contingencies this might mean all the difference between national salvation and perdition. It is not surprising then if Belgian opinion is seriously disturbed at the outlook.

The Fortification of Flushing.

CHAPTER XXI

THE COAST TOWNS

THE great national port of Antwerp lies sixty-five miles up a tidal river. The sea-coast of Belgium commences near Knocke, on the Dutch frontier, and extends for a distance of fifty miles to the French frontier, a little north of Dunkirk. In that stretch there are six places that may be designated by the name of Coast Towns, the most important, of course, being Ostend. The coast is marked by an unbroken line of sand dunes, in places perhaps a hundred feet above sea level, but for the greater distance only a few feet above high water mark. As the number of sea-bathing places is steadily increasing, and as the first step taken in founding a new "*plage*" is to build an embankment in brick and stone for the purpose of a promenade, the time may not be far distant when the whole of the Belgian coast will be flanked by a raised walk with the exception of the two inlets, at Ostend, for the port and at Zeebrugge for the ship canal. At both these places fine bridges already exist for foot and vehicular traffic.

The Dunes.

The name of the coast towns in their order from north to south are Knocke, Heyst, Blankenberghe, Ostend, Middelkerke, Nieuport and La Panne. Of these none have ports except Ostend and Nieuport, which are placed on inlets of the sea. Knocke, Heyst, and La Panne are merely minor sea-bathing places inhabited during the summer season chiefly by Belgian families from the great cities. Many Belgians have their own *châlets* at the seaside; others less fortunate herd together in the few hotels which are crammed from cellar to roof. At the places named the charges *en pension*, even during the

The Coast Towns.

height of the season, do not exceed eight francs a day. Blankenberghe is a larger and more fashionable resort of the same character, but the prices are much higher and approximate to those at Ostend. Blankenberghe is the most bracing of the Belgian watering-places, and is very popular with German visitors. It comes with them next after Scheveningen, the seaside suburb of the Hague. Once the season is over in these places the hotels are closed, the shutters are put up all along the front and a stray visitor would find himself in places that for all practical purposes might be regarded as dead cities.

Ostend.

Ostend, called in the public notices the "Queen of Continental Seaside Places," stands on a plane of its own. Besides being the most fashionable and the most popular watering-place in Belgium it is a seaport, and one with an ancient history. It has not merely a past but a future, and the day may come when, by the intervention of scientific dredging, it will be classed as a great maritime port.

Ostend, which means, as its name reveals, east end or extremity, came into notice at the end of the sixteenth century because it was the nearest landing place to England. During the religious wars Antwerp, being in the possession of the Spaniards, the Dutch made a great effort to hold Ostend, which was then well fortified, being surrounded by a deep moat or canal. It was garrisoned by a mixed force of Dutch and English, and undoubtedly formed a useful and menacing *pied-à-terre* for the Protestant Powers. For the same reason the Spaniards resolved to get possession of it, and one of the first undertakings of the Archduke Albert was to entrust the siege of this place to the great Spanish General, Spinola. The siege lasted nearly four years, relays of volunteers from this country going over to take part in the defence, but at last the town had to surrender. It underwent after Fontenoy a siege as brief as the earlier one was protracted; and it was regarded as one of the fortified places of the country until

its fortifications were razed after the new scheme of 1859 was sanctioned.

" The Austrians were the first to endeavour to make Ostend a commercial port and they were moved to do this by the fact that Antwerp was useless to them on account of the treaty with the Dutch closing the Scheldt. The Emperor Charles VI took up the question with great energy and founded there the Ostend Company which was intended to trade with the Indies, and to be the rival of the English and Dutch East India Companies. It was far from unsuccessful, and founded several important stations on the coast of India. Its activities brought down upon it the jealousy and resentment of the English Company, but as the Empire and England were allies in those days, the flag of the Ostend Company had to be treated with a certain respect. The opportunity of getting rid of a troublesome rival presented itself when the Emperor desired to obtain England's adhesion to the Pragmatic Sanction by which his crown was to pass to his daughter Maria Theresa. Part of the price for this friendly act asked by England in the interests of the East India Company, was the suppression of the Ostend Company, and it was suppressed.

Although the development of Ostend was thus arrested it continued to be used as the point of departure for England, and the Emperor Joseph II, among his other reforms for the benefit of Belgium, constructed new locks on the old canal between the town and Bruges. During the campaign of 1815 the British troops were landed at Ostend and many of them were conveyed by barges up the canals to Ghent. After Waterloo communications between England and Belgium greatly increased, and a packet sailed once a week from Ostend for Harwich. With the introduction of steam the number of passages was increased, and after the supersession of Dutch authority Ostend continued until the freeing of the Scheldt in 1863 to be Belgium's one free port. With the freeing of that river Ostend began to experience official neglect, and but

for the personal interest taken by Leopold II in its affairs it would have reached a lower depth than ever of misfortune.

At first that interest was concentrated on the development of Ostend as a resort for those in search of health and pleasure, but about the year 1895 the late King's attention was turned to its greater possibilities as a seaport. One of the defects of the old harbour was that in none of the basins was there sufficient space for a ship to turn round. Steamers had, therefore, to go out backwards, aggravating the difficulties of the narrow entrance and entailing considerable delay. It was decided to excavate an entirely new port lying to the east of the small basin flanked by the old landing-stage, and to make it of sufficient depth and dimensions to accommodate a fleet of large steamers. There is now no difficulty in turning the steamers within the harbour, and the old quay which barely sufficed for the packets has now been carried back for more than a mile. New lines of railway have been laid down close to this quay, and all the appurtenances for dealing with a heavy goods traffic have been provided.

Ostend now enjoys a practical monopoly of the light goods and parcels traffic between England and Belgium. It is also the main passenger and mail route, new turbine steamers having been recently provided, and through express trains run to Berlin and St. Petersburg in Northern Europe, and Vienna and Constantinople in southern. The new accommodation for ships of the largest tonnage in the new basins and docks of Ostend is far in excess of its present requirements; and the future must be left to show whether it will ever realise the grandiose ideas of Leopold II.

Ostend as a Port.

The defect of Ostend as a port for ocean-going commerce is the narrowness of the entrance which, moreover, cannot be widened, and at low tide there is not enough depth of water to admit the largest steamers. It was this consideration that led to the construction of the ship-canal from Bruges to the sea at a point called Zeebrugge between Blankenberghe

and Heyst. This scheme was taken in hand some years before the improvements at Ostend were commenced, and was specially intended to revive the glories of Bruges. This canal was expressly excavated for the purpose, at a depth of thirty-three feet at low water, the level being kept at that point above the locks, and must not be confounded with the old Ostend-Bruges canal still in use for barges and small pleasure steamers. The entrance to the canal is protected by an enormous breakwater stretching out into the sea for over a thousand yards, and forming a curve at the extremity. This was constructed at enormous cost with the view of preventing the sand silting up again and closing the entrance that had been successfully hollowed out. A steam dredger is also kept constantly at work so that as far as human means allow there is absolute security for the main channel. At the end of the breakwater is a pier and landing-stage in deep water, over 100 feet in depth, and it was hoped that the large German steamers from and to Hamburg would make a point of calling there. So they did for a time, but the practice never became general and has now been abandoned. At the present moment steamers ply regularly between Bruges and Grimsby, and a direct trade has sprung up between the North of England and the old Flemish city. The new harbour at Ostend and the ship canal to Bruges are striking testimonies to the commercial activity of the Belgians stimulated by the untiring energy and broad views of their late ruler.

Nieuport, the only other of the coast towns that need be specially referred to, lives on its past. No reforming ruler has yet taken its fortunes in hand, and yet it possesses a little river which might easily be canalised to as far up as Ypres, at least. This is the Yser. Its importance at present is derived entirely from sea-fishing, and it enjoys in common with Antwerp and Ostend the advantage of possessing a State school of training in navigation.

All these coast towns are interested more or less in the sea fisheries. It may be said that the bulk of the population

resident throughout the whole of the year at these places (Ostend excepted) is composed of fishermen. In 1908 the official returns give a total for the fishing fleet of 449 smacks of a tonnage of 8,400 tons employing 2,150 men. In addition at least as many women are employed on shore in purchasing and distributing the fish. At Ostend there is an extensive and carefully preserved oyster-bed which supplies not merely Belgium but a great part of France. A part is also set aside for lobsters and crabs. The principal fish disposed of at Ostend are turbot and soles, and these are sent in immense quantities to Paris.

Sea Fisheries.

While on the subject of Belgian maritime activity it may be mentioned that the whole of the Belgian marine (in 1908) consisted of eighty-eight steamers with a tonnage of under 150,000 tons. Three-fourths of the trade to and from Belgium is borne on British ships. The passenger service between Ostend and Dover is at present conducted at a considerable loss, and the different arrangements made to popularise the route have not yet availed to greatly diminish it. The fact is that it has a formidable competitor in the service between Harwich and Antwerp, and now the direct route from Yorkshire to Bruges has taken away part of the northern traffic. It is clear that the Belgians are still a long way off from ranking as a maritime people. Flemish sailors have a good enough reputation with those who employ them, and they alone are now employed on the national ships, but they are few in number. Many years must elapse before Belgium will be able to boast of even its mercantile marine. With regard to one for coast defence that is non-existent; but in the official plans for defending Antwerp a place was assigned to a river squadron of torpedo boats and submarines. This squadron only exists on paper.

The Belgian Marine.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ARDENNES

BELGIUM is provided with a great national playground and holiday centre in the region known to us as the Ardennes. This region includes the whole of the province of Luxemburg and a good part of the provinces of Liége and Namur. It is bounded on the north and west by the Meuse, on the south by France and the Grand Duchy, and on the east by Prussia. It consists for the most part of undulating country, never less than 600 feet above sea level, and rising in some parts to an altitude of nearly 2,000 feet. The country is well wooded, but the oak forests, which were the pride of the old Ardennes, have totally disappeared. At one time it looked as if the whole country would be stripped clear of timber, but precautions were taken thirty years ago to avert this calamity by passing a law making replanting obligatory. In this way the Ardennes are becoming as remarkable for their fir plantations as they were in the times of Cæsar and the Wild Boar for their oak forests.

The Great Holiday Centre of Belgium.

While the Meuse forms a convenient water route round the whole of this region, it is rather remarkable that not one of its numerous tributaries, which lend such an attractive feature to Ardennes landscapes, is navigable. These streams, commencing in the vicinity of Liége and passing westwards, are the Vesdre, the Ourthe, the Amblève, the Lesse, and the Semois. They are all in their way picturesque, and a few are dotted with the ruins of the castles once held by the de la Marcks and their vassals. Unfortunately the ruins are mere shells. The most picturesque scenery is encountered in the valleys of the Amblève and the Semois, the former passing through

Picturesque Scenery.

a rocky valley, and the latter through the most beautifully wooded country in Belgium. We shall return to describe both in some detail further on.

Another remarkable thing about the Ardennes is its accessibility and, as it were, penetrability. This is due to the well-arranged system of light railways which extend in all directions, and without spoiling the views owing to the trains being built on a miniature pattern. There are three lines of major importance. These are first the main line from Brussels to Metz and Switzerland. This stretches across the region under description from Namur to Arlon, and has important junctions at Marloie and Libramont. At Marloie the second important line links on with the main system. This is the direct line from the heart of the Ardennes to Liége, with a junction at Rivage for the line serving the Amblève. The third line links on at Libramont. It forms a kind of loop round the whole of eastern Belgium commencing at Pepinster, and passing by Spa, Stavelot, Viel Salm, Gouvy and Bastogne to Libramont. This line continues westwards of that place to Bertrix, Paliseul, and then turns northwards by Beauraing to join the Rochefort-Dinant railway at Houyet. The light railways branching off at different points from these main lines are intended to make the principal points of attraction accessible and need not be more fully particularised.

Local Railways.

The final attraction of the Ardennes as a holiday ground, from the Belgian point of view, is the cheapness of life in the numerous hotels scattered all over the region. There is an absence of luxury but scrupulous cleanliness. Good food and plenty of it is provided, and the whole *pension* costs no more than five francs a day, which is increased to six in the more frequented resorts during July and August. It is not surprising, then, to find the hotels full to overflowing during the height of their brief season when they have to quarter many of their visitors in lodgings in the village or townlet, but no

Cheapness of Life.

Marischal *Rochefort*

A GENERAL VIEW OF ROCHEFORT

extra charge is made. These hotel proprietors are so highly conscientious that a deduction is made off the bill for meals taken elsewhere, a practice which gives the fullest possible liberty for making excursions. The English tourist has found his way to the best known centres in the Ardennes, such as Dinant, Rochefort and La Roche. He is seen but infrequently on the Semois, and in some parts of the Ourthe valley is practically unknown.

To describe the Ardennes as a whole, or even to enter into any close detail about any special portions of it, would far exceed the dimensions of this volume. Nor

Spa.

is it necessary to say anything about Spa, which comes within the geographical area, but is more of a fashionable watering-place with which the primitive Ardennes townlets ought not to be compared. It will suffice then to give some description of a few of the best known centres such as Rochefort and the famous grottoes, La Roche, St. Hubert and the forest, Dinant and the Meuse valley, Bouillon and the Semois.

Rochefort is a well-built and scrupulously clean little town traversed by a stream called the Lomme, and lying in the hollow of a basin surrounded by breezy

Rochefort.

downs and pine woods. Owing to its good sanitary conditions and the health-giving properties of the air many Belgians have fixed their residences there, and there is consequently more life in the place throughout the whole of the year than in any other town of the Ardennes with the exception of Dinant. But it is not with Rochefort as a *ville coquette* that we have to deal, but with Rochefort as the centre of the remarkable grotto region which extends as far as Han sur Lesse.

The striking feature in this region is the disappearance of the little rivers which find mysterious subterranean channels and are temporarily lost to view. The Lomme and its tributary, the Wamme, pass out of sight at several points round Rochefort, and all attempts to find or expose the hidden

channel have failed. But in the course of those searches the grotto of Rochefort was discovered in the inside of the hill on the southern side of the town which is crowned by the ruined castle once owned by the Counts of Rochefort. This discovery was made forty years ago, but it is only within the last ten years that this grotto has been properly exploited by the introduction of the electric light and other improvements. The grotto contains three fine halls, the largest of which is called the hall *du Sabbat*. The grotto is remarkable for the richness of its stalactites and stalagmites, but no trace of the lost river has been found. It is confidently declared that there are many more subterranean discoveries to be made at Rochefort, but perhaps it is felt that a sufficiency of grottoes is better than a surfeit, and the really remarkable grottoes at Han now to be described are enough to satisfy most peoples' curiosity.

The Grottoes.

The village of Han is situated on the river Lesse, which flows into the Meuse a little south of Dinant. Unlike Rochefort, which has distinct claims to notice, Han is known only for its grottoes, and derives its name from the Walloon word "han," signifying a gulf or merely a hole in the ground. As a matter of fact, this is exactly what is to be seen on the southern side of the village where the river Lesse buries itself by an insignificant looking hole in the mountain that rears its dome-shaped form above the village, and disappears from view. It reappears within the mamelon itself in a gulf, lofty, vaulted and absolutely shrouded in darkness, and this hidden bay becomes, on reaching the northern side of the mountain, the normal course of the river. By what concealed channels it makes its way under the mountain has never been discovered. All that is seen in the interior is a tiny channel of water filtering through the main hall of the grotto, and although it rises considerably when the river is flooded it never attains dimensions sufficient to justify our regarding it as even an important branch of the stream.

The entrance to the grottoes is made near the hole in the wall of the mountain which is called "*la perte de la Lesse.*"

The Lesse.

Despite efforts to trace the exact course of the stream, or to fathom the gulf the discoveries have been nil. A more successful effort has been made in establishing a practical passage under the mountain by converting openings through which a man could merely crawl into galleries that allowed of persons walking with little inconvenience in single file. The galleries and passages connect altogether nearly twenty halls, large and small, and furnish the more beautiful part of the extraordinary freaks of Nature's architecture which form the inner decoration of this hollowed mountain. Some of the stalactites, especially in the four small side rooms, are of remarkable beauty. They have taken fantastic forms which give their names to these side chapels, such as the Mosque, the Alhambra, and the Portico. In another there is a faithful representation of a Gothic cathedral whose delicate tracery suggests an ivory model.

The principal of the inner chambers is the vast Hall of the Dome, 165 feet long by 150 feet broad, and rising to a height of over 160 feet into the air. This immense vault is shrouded in darkness except when the electric light is turned on to bring into relief the simulacrum of a throne, assigned to Pluto as the deity of the nether world, but even the roof is practically hidden. It is computed that the floor of the Hall is 230 feet above the bed of the Lesse, and consequently the dome is nearly 400 feet. This must bring it very near to the summit of the mountain. From the Dome room the passages lead by a gradual descent through several *salons* of minor beauty and importance to the exit.

Next to the view of the great Hall the exit makes the deepest impression on the visitor. The dark and gloomy bay is approached by a long gallery littered with rocks which are supposed to have fallen during an earthquake in 1828. Waiting for the visitors are a sufficient number of large boats

capable of carrying a dozen passengers apiece, and as the place is in absolute darkness save for a few lanterns carried by the guides the scene is weird in the extreme. The dark portion of the water, which is of great but unknown depth, extends for two hundred yards and then in the distance appears a little light which might well be taken for a star. At this moment the principal guide fires off the customary pistol which awakes innumerable echoes in the vaulted roof. A visit to the Han grottoes is thus one of considerable interest from start to finish.

The theory is that the river channel passes through a stratum of Devonian chalk which separates the geological formation of the Condroz region from that of the Ardennes. The crystalline formations of the Devonian stratum lend themselves especially to those strange stalactites which are the ornament of the Han grottoes. Here we have the curious circumstances of stalactites formed from dripping water meeting and even joining the stalagmites formed by rising water, or the jets thrown up through fissures by the pressure of the subterranean water. Explorations are always going on for fresh discoveries, but the beauty spots at least are believed to be all located. All visitors to the Ardennes should make a point of seeing the Han grottoes, but it is wise to avoid doing so on any of the national holidays (Easter, Whitsun, and the Assumption) when the crowd is excessive.

La Roche.

Another centre of attraction is La Roche, situated on the Ourthe in the heart of the Ardennes. It is chiefly remarkable for its sylvan attractions, and is surrounded by glorious woods. Indeed, there is no better place for appreciating what the Ardennes forest must have been like in its prime. The small townlet lies in a basin, and consists of one long straggling street with the river casting a loop round it. The place was commanded in old days by a castle situated on a rock of no great altitude on the eastern side of the town, and the town is, of course, named after it. The ruins of the castle

are of considerable interest, but they were allowed to crumble away during so many years that only the outer shell remains. It is now under State protection as a public monument. The Castle of the Counts, as it is called, is held to be less interesting than the Devil's Castle, a curious freak of nature representing a feudal castle with tower battlements and wall formed out of rock. In old days La Roche was only in communication with the outer world by diligence, and the descent from the heights of La Fraiture or Champlon into the little town used to be an exciting experience, but this has all been changed by the laying down of a steam tramway from Melreux (a station on the line from Marloie to Liége) to La Roche, which conveys every day during the season an unending flow of visitors to the place.

But if La Roche is now easily accessible and in consequence overcrowded in July and August there extends beyond it to the south and the south-east a primitive and still unspoilt region. This may be explored on foot or driving, and in many parts the pedestrian has the advantage. There is first of all the walk up the main Ourthe valley for twenty miles, and then along its eastern branch to Houffalize, patronised by the Belgians for its invigorating air. It stands at an altitude of about 1,500 feet. At Houffalize connection is re-established with the outer world, for here is the terminus of a steam tramway connecting with Bourcy, a station on the Libramont-Bastogne-Gouvy line.

If the tourist, at the point of bifurcation, follows the western Ourthe he will soon find himself in the northern approaches to the Forest of St. Hubert, and after some distance he will reach Lavacherie from which the town of St. Hubert is only a short distance through the beautiful woods of Freyre. Close to Lavacherie is Amberloop, identified with the fortress of Ambra destroyed by Attila. At this place the two Pepins had a residence for hunting in the Ardennes, and one of them is said to have founded here the church and monastery which were

Forest of St. Hubert.

transferred later on to St. Hubert. Some interesting memorials of the Roman period have been found in the neighbourhood, for instance, the altar with figures in relief of Minerva, Diana, Mercury and Hercules, which now finds a place in the Museum of Luxemburg.

St. Hubert is famous for its Abbey Church, dedicated to St. Hubert, the patron saint of hunters, and about five miles from the town in the woods near Champlon is a place still called Converserie, which is supposed to have witnessed the conversion of the lawless and pagan lieutenant of the House of Pepin. The latest critics have thrown doubt on the accuracy of the legend of his conversion having been effected by the sudden encounter with a stag bearing a fiery cross between its antlers, for the simple reason that the same adventure had befallen a Roman officer named Placidas five and a half centuries earlier who became St. Eustace, the first patron saint of the huntsman. But St. Eustace is forgotten and St. Hubert is remembered. In the ninth century his shrine had become the centre of pilgrimage for all who had received injury whilst hunting, or been bitten by dogs. A thousand years have not diminished this practice, and it is computed that 50,000 pilgrims visit St. Hubert during the week in which falls the Saint's day, and in cases of hydrophobia to join the pilgrimage is regarded as an infallible cure. It is probable that this practice acts as a sedative on the nerves, and diminishes the fright which is the chief stimulant of the disease.

The Abbey Church is interesting, and something has been accomplished in the way of undoing the mischief caused by incompetent and ignorant restorers. At one time the Abbey ruled over forty villages, and was the richest in the diocese of Liége. Its glory was destroyed by the French Revolution. Its possessions were sold for about £75,000, but the church itself was saved by a public subscription of about £1,500, which satisfied the Republican authorities. The bells, however, were put in the melting-pot and cast into bullets.

The valley of the Meuse from Namur to the French frontier is one of the most attractive regions of what we call colloquially, and without any precise geographical distinction, the Ardennes. In summer steamers ply between Namur and Hastière, which is some distance above Dinant. A railway also runs alongside the river crossing from the right bank to the left near Yvoir, and finally linking on with a French line at Givet. Owing to its accessibility this region is far better known than the interior of the Ardennes. It is, therefore, well to remember that the conditions are not the same, that the hotels are more up to date and consequently much dearer. This is especially the case at Dinant, where there are two first-rate hotels, the *Postes* and the *Tête d'or*. The five chief places of residence are in their order up the river Yvoir, Dinant, Anseremme, Waulsort and Hastière. Yvoir is situated at the point where the Bocq (which supplies Brussels with its best drinking water) flows into the Meuse, but calls for no special notice. Anseremme is at the junction of the Lesse with the Meuse, and used to be a spot favoured by artists, but the new railway bridge has spoilt the view. Anseremme is, however, much cheaper to stop at than Dinant, and is a very convenient spot from which to explore the most picturesque part of the Lesse. Here are to be seen the beautiful castle of Walzin, the famous caves of the stone age at Furfooz, and the once royal Ardenne domain specially favoured by Leopold I. Further up the Lesse is Ciergnon, which King Albert has selected as his home in the Ardennes, Opposite Ciergnon is the carefully preserved royal chase of Villers.

Dinant.

Dinant is favoured by the Belgians for its boating and fishing facilities. The river at this point is lined by *châlets*, which are only used as residences in the summer, and there are floating swimming-baths in the river. Waulsort and Hastière are more the resort of the tourist than the fixed resident, but at the latter place many modern villas have

been constructed. These places possess also convenient access to the charming region round Chimay and Couvin, which is more primitive even than the heart of the Ardennes. Dinant itself is an interesting town famous from the Middle Ages when it was the first city of the Prince Bishopric of Liége. It suffered heavily at the hands of Charles the Bold during the great siege of 1466, on which occasion the Burgundian demolished the walls and got rid of the principal citizens by throwing them into the river from the cliff of Bouvignes. The old castle on the heights above the town, modernised by Vauban and the Dutch, occupies a picturesque position, and its chroniclers boast that it was once inhabited by Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon. It is reached by 408 steps from the side of the old church, which is one of the best specimens of early Gothic to be found in Belgium to-day in spite of the ravages of time and war. Down to 1859 Dinant was a fortress. It was then dismantled with other places of the same secondary value from a military point of view.

Near Dinant and recalling some incidents of the purely legendary period is the locally famous Rocher Bayard. It lies on the right bank half-way between Anseremme and Dinant, and is a pyramidal rock now detached from the main cliff. Formerly the road passed through an archway cut through the rock. The rock receives its name not from the Chevalier Bayard of the sixteenth century but from the legendary horse of the name famous in the eighth century. It was at this point that he is supposed to have escaped from Charlemagne by swimming across the Meuse. The legend of the good horse Bayard and Aymon's Four Sons, whom he once saved by carrying them on his back out of danger, is still one of the most popular in Belgium. The rock itself is gradually crumbling away, and will in the course of a little time disappear. There is much of interest to while away a visit to Dinant, but the air in summer is not invigorating like that of the higher Ardennes. The ordinary visitor never sees the most impressive sight to be beheld here, which

Louis Libar *Bouillon*

PANORAMA OF BOUILLON

is in winter when the river, running like a mill race, brings down the blocks of ice formed amidst Ardennes snows.

We will now pass to the Semois, the most southern tributary of the Meuse so far as Belgium is concerned. It flows into the main river at Monthermé on French soil, but its most picturesque portion begins at Hautes Rivières near which it enters Belgium. The two strikingly characteristic features of this stream are, first, its sinuous course, and secondly, the beautiful woods in which it is embowered. With regard to the former point the length of the river is 120 miles, but as the crow flies from the source to its junction with the Meuse the distance is not more than sixty-five miles. The woods at Bohan, Vresse, Alle, Bouillon, Dohan and Amerois are among the finest to be met with throughout the Ardennes region, and for the greater part of the way they come down to the banks of the river, which at a few places is fordable. For a great part of the route from France the way is through the woods by paths raised immediately above the river. Alle, because there are facilities for river bathing, fishing and boating, is the place most favoured by the Belgians. The best hotel in the whole of the region is also situated there.

The Semois.

The villages that dot the river banks find a striking contrast in the town of Bouillon, a relic of antiquity. Here on the rocky promontory which the Semois engirdles on three sides stands the original castle of Godfrey of Bouillon which he valiantly and successfully defended when he was only seventeen years of age, and from which he took his name. All things considered it is in an excellent state of preservation, and the seat is still shown from which Godfrey looked out for the approach of his enemies. The old town nestles under the castle on both sides of the river which is crossed by a stone bridge, and as there are good hotels named the *Poste* and the *Ardennes* in the town it makes a very good centre for excursions throughout the lower Semois valley, more especially for those who come

Bouillon.

expressly to see the grand view at Rochehaut. Bouillon is also convenient for visiting the battlefield of Sedan. It will be remembered that after the battle about 6,000 French soldiers crossed into Belgium and were detained there till the end of the war. Napoleon III was allowed to proceed to Germany through Belgium and passed the first night after the surrender in the *Poste* hotel at Bouillon. Bouillon, once a French duchy, was for a short time an independent community before being joined to the Netherlands in 1815. Turenne used to call Bouillon the key of the Ardennes, but it may be doubted whether this is true since the formation of the Elsenborn Camp in Prussia, to which I first drew marked attention in 1907. That has opened a new eastern gate into the Ardennes of which old strategists knew nothing.

It is not necessary to say much about the upper course of the Semois except to repeat that it preserves its rare and distinctive charm. At a place, or rather channel called La Cuisine, haunted by herons and kingfishers, is to be found an unique bit of savage landscape. The Semois has so far escaped the inroads of the excursion hordes. It is just a little too difficult of access for them, and those in search of quiet "far from the madding crowd" could not do better than give one of the places named or Herbeumont a trial. Enough has perhaps been said to explain why the Belgians regard the Ardennes as their great national holiday resort. It is a region remarkable for the picturesqueness and variety of its scenery, the health-giving properties of its mountain air, and the cheapness of the hotels. There is another point of attraction about it. Although certain spots are frequented by the foreign tourist the Belgians enjoy a practical monopoly of some of the best bits for themselves.

La Cuisine.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FORMER STAVELOT-MALMÉDY PRINCIPALITY

THERE are some curious instances of the Belgian nationality overlapping the frontier and partially passing under foreign rule. The most interesting case in point is that of the old Stavelot principality which was dissolved by the Treaty of Luneville in 1806, and subsequently divided between Prussia and the Netherlands by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. Stavelot itself went to Belgium and its dependent town Malmédy to Prussia, and the break up of this old Walloon State, which had existed for 900 years, has been ratified, as it were, by the lapse of a century. Until the other day both sections spoke the same tongue, and there was no linguistic frontier. The change effected by the new German language laws has not yet disturbed the harmony of their relations. Neither has it led to any change of religion. They are all Catholics.

An Old Walloon State.

The town of Stavelot is one of those clean, well-built, and well-ordered townlets that give the visitor a high opinion of Walloon character and capacity. There is a fine old square of mediæval houses, and both there and in the environs is to be found a considerable leisured class who form among themselves a hospitably disposed society. It is rather curious to come across in this out of the way spot families of the names of Talbot, Herbert, and Pierpont whose ancestors were natives of the old city centuries ago. Not less strange is it to find surnames of Roman origin, such as Gambrinus, Marius, and Mamius. The famous Liége family of Orban (which is only a modification of Urbanus) has also representatives among the citizens of Stavelot.

Stavelot.

There is little to show of the glories of the days of the Prince Abbot. The walls of the Abbey are standing, one can see what was the refectory or banqueting hall, the meadows that surround the massive framework of the main building were once the garden and orchard. In the adjacent chapel are some relics of St. Remacle, who was the patron of Stavelot as well as the first Bishop of Liége. But except for the houses there is little that could be called ancient in Stavelot. Just behind it and parallel with the main street runs the main railway from Pepinster and Spa to Gouvy, and at two and a half miles eastwards along a magnificent road the Prussian frontier may be reached.

St. Remacle.

It may seem rather absurd to say so, but it is precisely this proximity to Prussian territory that constitutes the importance and interest of Stavelot to-day. Malmédy, the other half of the Stavelot principality, lies in the valley of the Warche, a tributary of the Amblève, about two miles east of the Belgian frontier, or nearly five miles from Stavelot. The old abbey is still in existence as a Catholic church, but the adjacent Convent is used as a Government office. There is not the same number of old Walloon families at Malmédy that are to be found at Stavelot; but of recent years the industrial importance of the place has greatly increased, and a considerable number of German men of business have taken up their residence there. There are consequently visible signs in newly-built houses that the town is increasing in population and prosperity. Paper factories, tanneries, and timber yards are becoming quite numerous in a town which twenty years ago enjoyed the calm of the Middle Ages.

Malmédy.

For some years past Malmédy has been connected by a light railway with Weismes, a station on the main line from Aix-la-Chapelle to St. Vith. Since 1908 this line, which was only single railed, has been converted into a double line, as

described by a writer in the *Fortnightly Review* for February, 1910, and great importance is attached to it by German military authorities. Since the doubling of the main line the branch line to Malmédy has been continued up to the Belgian frontier, and the Belgian authorities are themselves constructing the link from the frontier to the Stavelot station. There will thus be direct communication between the German and Belgian railway systems at a point beyond the range of the fire from the forts surrounding Liége. When General Brialmont laid down those forts it was with the idea of "commanding all the roads leading into Belgium from Germany." With remarkable astuteness the Germans have falsified that prediction.

Railway Communication.

The position has been turned by the new railways laid down, or improved in the Malmédy region, and the significance of the change is increased by the fact that close to the Belgian frontier Germany has created a large military camp where, during the summer, between twenty and thirty thousand troops are always assembled. This camp is at a place called Elsenborn, and to leave no room for doubt as to the German plans in establishing this camp, roads levelled for the rapid passage of artillery have been laid down in almost a bee line to the Belgian frontier at Viel Salm south of Stavelot. It is also necessary to remember that there are no troops whatever on the Belgian side of the frontier. The Ardennes are completely denuded of troops. There is one infantry regiment at Arlon, close to the frontier of the Grand Duchy which, as a neutral and unarmed State, is not a dangerous neighbour. It is of no military value there, and in the event of an invasion would be isolated and cut off from its line of retreat to Namur. It will thus be seen that a military peril of a grave character has been allowed to spring up almost unperceived at a point less than seventy miles distant from the undefended side of the French frontier.

Elsenborn.

Another change has taken place in the condition of the once tranquil, isolated and little regarded district of which Malmédy may be regarded as the central point. In the days of the French Republic and Empire the whole of this region was included in the department of the Ourthe, which had its administrative centre at Marche. There was a close bond of union between the rulers and the ruled in community of language. When Prussia was installed in power no attempt was made to change the language in use, and the inhabitants of the district were allowed to receive their education in French. This state of things endured till 1902.

Language Laws.

But French-speaking Germans are not at all to the taste of the powers in Berlin, who, before the year just named, had begun to enforce uniformity of speech in German in Poland and Alsace. Malmédy was given a little more grace, but eventually the time arrived when French was banned in the schools and German substituted and rigorously enforced. At the present moment the struggle of the languages at Malmédy is in full progress, but unless some quite unforeseen events arise it is certain to end in the triumph of German. The Walloons detest the change but they must succumb. In public they are already afraid to employ any language save German, but at their own firesides they deplore the change in French. As a large contingent of the German navy is recruited among the French-speaking races along the frontier the process of assimilating the German tongue will be facilitated and expedited. Before another generation grows up French will be as rarely heard at Malmédy as it is to-day at Montjoie. Although Montjoie only became Prussian in 1815 the French tongue died out there the more rapidly because it was isolated and had little or no intercourse with Belgium.

It is not only Prussia that is in possession of territory which ethnologically and linguistically ought to form part of Belgium. Dutch Limburg is not less distinctively Belgian than the strip of territory of which Malmédy is the

central point. This was secured from Belgium by the Twenty-Four Articles embodied in the definitive treaty of 1839 by way of compensation to Holland for the surrender of half of Luxemburg. Dutch Limburg is the part of the old Duchy lying on the right bank of the Meuse below Visé, and the town of Maestricht on the left bank was also left to Holland as an "enclave." The principal towns on the right bank that fell to Holland were Ruremonde and Sittard. Ruremonde has a place in history as the point where William of Orange forded the Meuse in his campaign with Alva, and is of considerable importance on account of the two bridges which to-day cross that river, one being for the direct railway from Germany to Antwerp. Sittard has become industrially important through the discovery of coal and iron-mines in the neighbourhood which are now worked to great profit and advantage. Altogether the surrender of Dutch Limburg has proved a considerable loss to Belgium, but it would be greatly increased if under any circumstances Ruremonde and the surrounding region were to pass into the possession of Germany.

Dutch Limburg.

There is a third case of this overlapping of authority on the frontier between Belgium and her neighbours, but there is this difference between it and the others in that it relates to a neutral territory. East by north of Liége on the Prussian frontier, near Walkenraedt, is a mountain. A little town consisting of a single main street and a public square has been built upon it, and in the interior of the mountain has been found one of the richest zinc mines in the world. It has been well exploited to the great advantage of its members, by a joint-stock company, of which the shares are held by Belgians, chiefly residents of Liége. The name of this place is Moresnet-Montzen, or Moresnet Mountain, and, as a rule, the definition neuter or neutral is added for reasons now to be explained.

Neutral Moresnet.

In 1815 Holland and Prussia in demarcating the frontier

between Liége and Aix-la-Chapelle found themselves unable to agree as to which should possess the conspicuous mountain just described. At that moment Europe was worn out with war and quarrelling, and it was felt incumbent to make some arrangement quickly. The two neighbours agreed in the dog-in-the-manger spirit that this little commune perched on a mountain, and occupying a strip of territory one and a half miles in length and one in breadth, should belong to neither by declaring it neutral. The fate of Moresnet was thus sealed nearly a hundred years ago, and when Belgium took the place of Holland one of the conditions stipulated for by Prussia was that the arrangement with regard to Moresnet should remain undisturbed.

The Local Government.

The Government of Moresnet has been carried on for the best part of a century by a Town Council presided over by a burgomaster, and neither of the Powers sought to interfere in its affairs. Within the last ten years, however, Prussia has shown an inclination to depart from this policy of non-interference, and has adopted a double-barrelled line of action in the matter. With one shot she has sought to compel the good people of Moresnet to declare their desire to become German subjects; with the other she has striven to terrorise the Belgian Government into surrendering its rights. That she has so far failed in both objects must be attributed to the unexpected tenacity of the citizens of Moresnet in upholding their independence rather than to the firmness of the Belgian Government. It has sometimes been thought at Brussels that the surrender of Moresnet would be a cheap price to pay for the support of Germany in more important matters.

The following description of the present situation is based on the best available information :—

The Present Situation.

"None the less for its neutrality Moresnet was and is Belgian in all essentials. The people speak French, are Catholics, and the lead from the mine finds its way to Herstal and Liége. The

shares of the Montzen Company are held and dealt with in Liége only. This state of things greatly irritated the German officials, and with the view of upsetting it they have of late been asserting themselves in various unpleasant ways to the intense irritation of the inhabitants. The control of the customs and the expressed desire of preventing Moresnet from being used for purposes of contraband have provided excuses for interference in the most ordinary affairs of life. After a little of this kind of pressure it was assumed that Moresnet was ripe to fall into the Imperial lap. In 1905, then, it was stated in the German papers that the people of Moresnet wished to become Germans and that Belgium was willing to sell or surrender her rights. There was not a word of truth in either part of the story, and an official contradiction was given as far as Belgium was concerned in the Brussels Chambers.

"Moresnet herself gave a still more effective answer. In 1907 a plebiscite was held, and ninety per cent. of the population voted for annexation to Belgium. The whole communal council voted in this sense with the exception of the burgomaster, who is a German. Since this incident the attitude of the German officials has become more aggressive. Customs officers patrol the street separating German jurisdiction from Belgian, and institute searches of the person with little or no reason. A story is current that to avoid paying the heavy duty on confectionery a wedding party crossed the road to the confectioner's and ate their pastry in his shop while the baffled customs officers glared through the window. *Se non e vero.* The latest incident occurred in 1910. Without word of warning Prussian officials arrived to take the dimensions of the communal buildings and to make an inventory of the contents of the churches and schools."

A Plebiscite.

Beyond her eastern frontier, then, Belgium sees a set of lost national possessions, the recovery of some of which would be very useful to her. Under the present dispensation they are

gone past recall, and it would be idle to speculate as to the chances of re-acquiring these detached blocks of the Walloon soil which historically speaking stretched to Aix-la-Chapelle, the capital of Charlemagne, the greatest member of the Walloon race.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ANCIENT TOWN OF MONTJOIE

If a striking contrast were sought between two scenes on the same river it would be hard to find one to surpass that of the Roer at Ruremonde and at Montjoie. At the former place its unrestrained waters flood the meadows in wasteful abundance, while at Montjoie they roll noisily but confined over a stony bottom through the long and sinuous main street of that most ancient and picturesque of mediæval townlets. Montjoie (perhaps correctly derived from Mons Jovis) will be familiar as a name to the reader from its forming part of the ancient battle-cries of France, Burgundy, and Bourbon, but the place itself is visited rarely by an Englishman, despite its superb situation. The first King-of-Arms in France (corresponding to our Garter King-of-Arms) was called Montjoie. The name in its French use is probably derived from the practice of raising a pile of stones to celebrate a victory. The highways in France were also marked by piles of stones along the track to which the name "Montjoie" was given.

The River Roer.

Over the highlands, round the crest of the surrounding hills, winds the railway from St. Vith to Aix-la-Chapelle, with its express trains, and its heavy goods traffic, although no one seems to know exactly where the trade that feeds the railway comes from, whilst five hundred feet below in the valley lies the straggling little town of Montjoie, with its extraordinarily lofty houses whose builders seem to have started them with the intention of reaching the surrounding summits, and then, after they had got far on their way, to have given up the effort in despair, and side by side with the main street flows the swiftly-running stream carrying the

tribute of the snows and the watercourses of the Hohe Venn and the Eiffel to the Meuse and the sea.

In the feudal ages Montjoie was the home of the Counts of Reichenstein, who built their strong castle on the southern of the two ranges that compress this town into such narrow limits between them that a cricket ball could easily be thrown across from one side to the other, while on the northern slope they placed their watch-tower or Haller, from which the four valleys that converge on Montjoie are commanded. The watchman in the Haller gave warning of the approach of friend or foe, and when he lit his signal fire the peasants and townsmen flocked to the Castle for the purpose of a common self-defence, as it was known that serious danger must be at hand.

Counts Reichenstein.

Both the castle and the Haller exist as ruins, but it is curious to note that while the extensive range of wall, tower and turret which once formed the home of the Reichensteins, and which still forms the dominating feature in the view, receives few visitors, the solitary Haller represents almost the daily pilgrimage of the resident or sojourner in the valley. Such is the attraction of a panorama. From the Castle little can be seen save the slate roofs of Montjoie, but from the Haller a new view can be discerned day after day for a considerable period in which wood, stream and rock combine to make a landscape as varied as it is charming. The Roer itself forms the central and dividing chain in the group, like a silvery thread it meanders through the valley extending from Grunenthal and Einruhr on the north to the ruins of the ancient monastery of Reichenstein, near Kalterherberg, on the south.

In this five or six miles of its course it is joined by numerous mountain streams, some little more than miniature waterfalls, others streamlets almost as important as the Roer itself. Among the latter the Perlenbach is the most interesting, for as its name implies, the mussels found in it once produced,

Rijnders *Ruremonde*

VIEW ON THE ROER, RUREMONDE

according to tradition, pearls which were reserved for the Count of the district as his feudal right. Mussels are still found in the stream, but no one within living memory has been so fortunate as to find a pearl, and perhaps, after all, the story of their existence is only a legend of the past. To-day the walk by the Perlenbach is the most charming in the district, and its trout are described as more delicious even than those of the Roer, which would satisfy most epicures.

The Pearl Stream.

Although Montjoie lies in a narrow valley the air there in the hottest summer is always fresh and invigorating, which is surprising when it is remembered that its own altitude is no more than 1,000 feet. This is attributed to the fact that Montjoie stands at the junction of four valleys, so that no matter from which direction the wind comes it always blows through the town. Then, again, shade is always obtainable. If the sun strikes the side on which the Haller mourns idly, "if aught inanimate e'er grieve," over its past utility that under the castle is wrapped in welcome shade, or up stream there is always the grateful shelter of the Kalterherberg woods as a place of refuge.

Another rare charm about Montjoie is its extreme quiet, the noisiest sound in the valley is the gurgling stream as it forces its way over the boulders past the quaint old houses which rise sheer from its banks when the river is in flood. The motor has not yet destroyed the peacefulness of this valley. For one thing it lies a little out of the beaten track, for another the Montjoie town council has left the lighting of its streets chiefly to nature, and as there are points where two carriages could not pass abreast, the most adventurous chauffeur rather fights shy of the main street of Montjoie after sunset with an unpleasant and almost certain prospect of finding himself in the river.

A Peaceful Valley.

Even for the pedestrian a walk through the one street—which practically forms the whole of the town—by the aid

of moon or starlight, assisted perhaps by an occasional candle in a shop window, or by a swinging oil-lamp at the door of a house of some importance, is attended with no small risk. Weird shapes and shadows fall across the path where the moon happens to break through the gaps in the houses flanking the street, cavernous tunnels scarcely to be distinguished from the irregular stone-flagged pavement itself lead under the houses to the stream, here deep and there again shallow, but always flowing with a swiftness that would quickly carry a man off his feet.

But after all the true charm of Montjoie can only be realised in the daylight, when every dormer-window and gable is exposed to view, when the exquisite iron and brass work on gateway, lamp and knocker, can be appreciated by close inspection, and when the distinctive crests on ancient houses, like that of the Golden Helmet on the Red House, can be clearly deciphered. These substantial and roomy houses show a past activity and importance that are not discoverable to-day. When one sees the grass-grown squares of Bruges the mind naturally reverts to its busy past when it was the mart of Europe, but who ever heard of the industry of Montjoie? Inquiry shows, however, that it, too, had its palmy days—Montjoie wool and silk long possessed a high reputation throughout the joint bishopric of Stavelot-Malmédy.

Old Buildings.

The industry has gone, but the houses of the wealthy merchant-weavers remain. There they are, high-storeyed, many-windowed, to testify to the prosperity of those who reared them high and laid their foundations deep. Many of them are in the rococo style, which shows no greater antiquity than the middle of the eighteenth century, others reveal tokens of a more ancient past. It is averred that many of the fugitives from the Palatinate in 1688-9 took refuge at Malmédy and Montjoie and brought them increased prosperity and a renewal of their earlier activity.

But the true secret of the mediæval charm of Montjoie

lies in the fact that it has come down to us untouched by outside influences, whether those of destruction or reconstruction. War has always sought easier valleys to penetrate than those of the Roer and Perlenbach, and more promising towns to pillage than that named from the apocryphal temple to the lord of Olympus on the adjacent summit. For a hostile collision in its valleys it would be necessary to go back to the period of the Robber Knights; or possibly even to the wars when Lorraine was left as a prize for the strongest in the break-up of the Carolingian Empire. Undisturbed peace and tranquillity furnish the key-note to its charm and explain the almost unique aspect of a town which has changed so little with the lapse of time.

CHAPTER XXV

KERMESSES, FÊTES, AND LEGENDS

THE first buildings of any permanent construction in Belgium were churches, or in the Flemish tongue, "*kerks*"; round these clustered the wattle huts of the people.

Kermesse.

When trade commenced to occupy the time and attention of the inhabitants of the land, markets, or "*messes*" were held under the church's shadow and protection. The church and the market-place supply the origin of the compound name of "*kermesse*," which has come to mean in the course of centuries, a fair. The Flemings were given to jollity, and they enjoyed themselves in the days of their prosperity with high living, somewhat boisterous games and "all the fun of the fair." Nor have they changed, as anyone may discover by a visit during the Carnival, more especially to Binche on Shrove-Tuesday. *Kermesse* is essentially a Flemish institution, and is not to be met outside of the Flemish-speaking provinces which includes Brabant. In the Walloon part of the country, where "free-thought" and unbelief are alleged to have made great progress, all the popular fêtes have a religious basis, and are immune from the noisy licence that seems to characterise the *kermesse*.

In Brussels no one would discover any difference between a *kermesse* and an English country fair, and the only matter that appears strange is that a great city should see in its midst the celebration of a country fair with booths, merry-go-rounds, menageries and stalls for the display of much tinsel and gawds. As each commune of Brussels holds its own *kermesse*, and a fair generally lasts a week, the air seems to be impregnated for a good portion of the summer with their influence, and if one's domestic returns home late or

not at all the cause is alleged to have been the *kermesse*. The fairs are held in some open place like the Boulevard Jamar, near the "gare du Midi," so as to interfere as little as possible with the general traffic.

The *kermesse* fête of the city of Brussels concentrates its effect on a procession through the streets and boulevards of the lower town to the Grand Place. The famous statuette known as the Mannikin Pis is taken down from its pedestal, dressed up in a fancy costume as a Garde Civique, and paraded in triumph. Gigantic figures of Gog and Magog follow in the cortège at a respectful distance, but all the honours of the day are reserved for the Mannikin, who has been called "the oldest citizen of Brussels." This statue, the work of Duquesnoy, dates from 1619, and is said to be only a freak of its author. The uniform in which it has always been dressed for the fête has changed with each form of government, and its wardrobe now numbers eight separate costumes, the person who has charge of them receiving a salary of eight pounds a year.

The Mannikin.

The most characteristic of all the *kermesses* is that celebrated every year at Binche on Shrove-Tuesday. It has more of the spirit of the old *kermesse* and less of the modern fair than perhaps any other still held in Belgium. Binche is a small town of Hainaut with a population of about 12,000 people, situated about half-way between Mons and Charleroi. As it is situated on a branch line it is seldom visited by the English tourist. The fêtes of Shrove-Tuesday are said to have originated with Mary of Burgundy, who celebrated them for the first time in the year 1477, on the occasion of her establishing a hunting seat in the neighbourhood. They have consequently been held for 433 years. Additions were made under her successors, notably the regents Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary; but the fundamental idea of the fête, viz., a disguise, was supplied by the young Duchess, who it may be supposed proposed it as the only way in which she

Fêtes at Binche.

could take part in it. The consequence is that no one may appear in their ordinary clothes on this occasion. The young men and women of the place appear as Pierrots and Pierrettes, while a special band figures as "Gilles." The precise origin of this name is obscure, by some it is considered a reference to St. George, and by others a term for a silly fellow. But in any case the Gilles of Binche are a select society, and apparently membership is hereditary. The costumes are valuable and include a plumed hat which is estimated to cost not less than twenty pounds.

The participants in the fray that follows, for the feature of the affair is the pelting of onlookers at the windows or balconies with oranges instead of confetti, are not merely disguised but generally put on false noses and hunchbacks. The Gilles Society has its own band, which plays its own special music, and the mad dances of the Gilles and the Pierrots down the long high street to the gardens where the Carnival ball takes place, savours of pandemonium. All the time the dancers are pelting the windows and people in them with the oranges carried in straw baskets. It is not etiquette to pelt anyone in the streets, but those in the houses are considered fair game. At Binche one sees the *kermesse* pure and simple combined with the orgy of the Carnival, but free of all the accessories of the fair. It is usual for as many as twenty thousand visitors to come into the place from the neighbouring towns of Hainaut and France, but prudent residents close all their shutters, and take their chance with the crowd in the streets. The festivities begin on the Monday evening and do not terminate till the sun is up on the Wednesday morning.

Mons Fête.

The nearest approach to what may be called the wild *kermesse* at Binche is the parade of Lumeçon, which takes place at Mons on Trinity Sunday. These fêtes are familiarly known as those of "doudou," but no one can give any better reason for the name than that it rhymes with "chou, chou,"

the familiar term for driving or chasing something or somebody which is used as the cry of those marching in the procession. Lumeçon is the Walloon of the French word *limaçon* (a snail), but the snail of Mons is a dragon which is carried at the head of the procession in effigy. This is a gilt dragon over thirty feet in length, and when the legend on which the parade is based is critically examined it turns out to be nothing more or less than our old friend of the nursery, St. George and the Dragon. It is impossible to assign a date to the first celebration of this fête, but it was certainly anterior to the battle of Crécy, at which a contingent from Mons fought on our side with much distinction. It has always been said that they took with them into the battle an enormous cannon which was brought home to Mons, and ever afterwards, as long as it held together, it figured in the procession, and when it came to pieces a wooden facsimile was provided. For some time, however, the cannon does not seem to have figured in the procession. The fête ends on the Grand Place with the slaying of the dragon by the modern representative of St. George, who is called Gilles de Chin in the local history.

The Hasselt Fête.

While the fêtes at Mons and Binche are annual affairs, those at Hasselt, in Limburg, are held only once in seven years, and consequently they gain in elaborateness. The religious element is also more prominent. The celebration takes place on the day of the Assumption (15th August), which is not only a great day for the Church, but also one of the three national holidays established by law in Belgium. The last fêtes were held in 1905, so that the next fall due in 1912.

The celebration is really in honour of the Virgin Mary, and is called that of *Virga Jesse*—the *patois* for Virgin and Jesus. It seems to be as old as Hasselt itself, and the origin of the legend is thus described. Hasselt derives its name from hazel-bosch (hazel wood), and was situated in old days

in the centre of an immense hazel wood. The town began with a shrine to the Virgin, which, as some say, was attached to a large tree at cross roads in the heart of the forest. Travellers were so rejoiced at getting thus far in safety that they made offerings for the happy termination of their journey. In this way the shrine, to which before long a chapel was added, became rich, and in a clearing of the forest a town gradually sprang up which is the modern Hasselt. The shrine with the Virgin's statue was transferred from the wood to the church, where it may still be seen black with age. On the occasion of the celebration the statue is taken down, dressed in costly robes, and crowned with a jewelled crown given by one of the Popes, and carried under a canopy through the streets.

That is the religious side of the ceremony, but the popular is still more obtrusive. In the first place the streets are lined with hazel trees placed in buckets, and the houses are embowered in branches and foliage gathered by the young from the neighbouring woods. This is to recall the time when Hasselt itself was a wood, and the practice is said to date from the fourteenth century. Indeed, the fêtes were held annually down to the eighteenth century, and it was only under French and Dutch rule that they were restricted to a septennial celebration.

The embowering of Hasselt may be termed the preparation of the scene for what follows. The first inhabitant of Hasselt is supposed to have been a countryman named Hendrich, who lived there in a hut with his pigs and his goats. He and his wife and his animals are carried in triumph through the streets, but his modern representative is allowed to smoke his pipe, which would have somewhat astonished the original Hendrich of the tenth or eleventh century. There also figures in the procession the knight who has lost his way in the forest and is led by the Virgin to Hendrich's hut. This incident has a very important bearing on the fortunes of Hasselt, for the knight kills the giant, or

A. and C. Blanckart *Hasselt*

THE FÊTE AT HASSELT

ogre, who dwelt in the recesses of the forest and rendered the routes unsafe for the peaceful traveller.

The reader will have no difficulty in concluding that of all the personages in the procession the one that attracts most popular interest is the Giant himself. He is called the "Lounge Man," the long or tall man. He is so big and tall that his part in the play cannot be filled, and he is therefore carried in effigy. He is shown in armour, seated on the trunk of a tree, placed in a waggon, or chariot, drawn by four horses. So far the procession can be interpreted in all its detail, but for the final touch in the arrangements no reasonable explanation has ever been offered. In the car behind the Giant is an immense barrel with a tap and an attendant. He serves all who wish, and who present basins, with thick pea-soup! Why it should be pea-soup no one has ever attempted to explain beyond suggesting that it might be intended as an object lesson in the practice of sobriety. Be that as it may, the fêtes of Hasselt enjoy an immense popular success, and are attended by as many as 30,000 curious visitors from Holland and Dutch Limburg.

The Lounge Man.

The fêtes of the Walloon region are even more distinctively religious than those of Hasselt. They are based, as a rule, on a miracle, and partake of the character of a pilgrimage. Typical of these may be chosen for brief description the procession once in seven years from Rochefort to Foy Notre-Dame, near Dinant. The history of this procession is fairly well authenticated, and dates no further back than the early years of the seventeenth century. The country was then visited with the plague. Many deaths had occurred, and failing the remedies of science those of faith alone offered. It was reported that someone who had made an offering at the Virgin's shrine at Foy Notre-Dame had been cured of the disease, whereupon the Count of Rochefort led his people in solemn procession to the shrine, which lies about fifteen miles out of Rochefort.

Processions of Faith.

The plague was stayed, and there does not appear to have been any further outbreak at Rochefort since that time, but the procession is still faithfully kept up.

Every year devout persons pay their homage at the miraculous shrine at Foy, but it is only once in seven years that the processional march is held. Long preparations and much drilling precede the expedition, which is made in military order. Those who are selected for the responsible position of the Count's bodyguard are carefully trained by an ex-soldier, not merely in the goose-step, but in the use of fire-arms, for a good deal of firing is indulged in on the return. The local worthy who represents the Count de Rochefort is very proud of himself, as clothed in armour he takes his place at the head of the procession on a spirited horse. He, too, has been carefully trained for his important rôle, for not everyone accustomed to broadcloth can wear armour without making himself ridiculous. However, thanks to the careful preparation, all goes off very well.

The date of the procession is Whit-Monday, and it will next take place in 1913. As the distance is considerable, for the majority in the procession walk the whole way there and back, a start is made shortly after the sun rises. The Count heads the procession, then comes his bodyguard, followed by the Catholic band playing religious and secular music. Then appear the clergy resplendent in chasuble and attended by acolytes, but they only attend the cortège to the limits of the town. The procession includes farmers on horseback, townsmen and villagers on foot, women and children in carts, waggons, and vehicles of all descriptions. The old women are even more keen to be present than the young, and count up the number of processions they have attended in the course of their lives. Sometimes the procession is quite a mile in length, and on that day Rochefort is left practically empty.

At Foy the procession is received by the local clergy and a crowd of curious sightseers from Dinant. A special service

is held in the church, offerings are made at the shrine, and then the processionists picnic in the neighbouring woods. Late in the afternoon the order of march is re-formed, and the party return to Rochefort. Darkness has long set in before they reach it, but the little town is lit up in their honour. The priests are again there to receive and bless them before they disperse, and as a final honour an old cannon is brought out from its hiding-place and fired several times on the approach to the old castle. It is said that the Count was thus received on his return from the original procession in 1610. There are many other pilgrimages or marches of a similar character carried out to-day in the region between the Sambre and Meuse. Here, if anywhere in Belgium, may be found the old folk-lore of the Belgian division of ancient Gaul. Chimay, Couvin and Mariembourg are samples of mediæval townlets not to be seen in any other part of the country.

Belgium is the home of legend. There is that of John of Nivelles and his dog. John was a Montmorency, and the ancestor of Count Horn. There is the story of Caracol and Bristecol (the history of Punch). But the most popular of all is the story of Aymon and his four sons and the wonderful horse Bayard. The Duke Aymon was one of the rebellious vassals of the Emperor Charlemagne, and when he was summoned to attend his sovereign to the wars he sent a curt refusal believing that his castle of Aigremont was so strong and inaccessible that the Emperor could never take it. This castle in the Houyoux valley of the region called Condroz exists to-day, partly as an imposing ruin and partly as the residence of the Counts D'Oultremont. It looks now inaccessible enough; no wonder it seemed to its owner in the ninth century beyond the reach of the most powerful assailant. Charlemagne having conquered his external foes decided to chastise his vassal, and directed a host to level Aigremont with the ground. The defenders were overmatched. Aymon was taken prisoner

Aymon and his Four Sons.

and carried off to Aix-la-Chapelle, and his brother Buves was slain.

But Aymon's four sons escaped by mounting all together on the wonderful horse Bayard, which flew like the wind and soon outdistanced all pursuers. They took refuge in the Ardennes forest where they built a stronger fort than Aigremont at Montfort on the Ourthe, and here again they defied the Emperor. The four sons were named Renault, Allard, Guichard and Richard. They were all of gigantic stature, Renault, the biggest, being sixteen feet high, and Bayard was his personal property, having been a gift from his cousin Maugis, the son of Buves. Although the castle was surrounded by a triple wall it fell to the Emperor's arms, and again the brothers had to mount Bayard and flee. They are next heard of in Gascony where they fought for King Yon, who, little grateful for their aid, surrendered them to Charlemagne. They succeeded in escaping, but their subsequent adventures are obscure. Renault entered the cloister at Cologne, and was one of the first architects of the cathedral. He is said to have been thrown into the Rhine by some of his masons whom he had offended. If this could be accepted as fact it would be the first "strike" on record. He was eventually canonised, and there is a fine monument to him at Dortmund, in Westphalia.

Of the other brothers there is little to tell, but report says they were all killed at different times and places. The last of them let Bayard loose, and he rushed into the forest, for the party had returned to the Ardennes. After a time Bayard himself was caught and brought before Charlemagne, who thus apostrophised him—"You have often upset my plans and now you shall do so no more." He ordered a heavy stone to be attached to his neck and then that he should be driven from the cliff at Dinant into the Meuse. The exact scene is supposed to have been at the Rocher Bayard, near Dinant. But when the gallant horse was forced over the

The Horse Bayard.

cliff he succeeded in ridding himself of the stone, and swimming across the river, escaped into the woods, and was never more seen by mortal eye. The old belief was that the steed was immortal, and in some of the villages within recent times, when the wind blew loudly at nights and children were querulous, they were silenced by being warned to listen to the noise of the steed Bayard as he raced through the village.

CHAPTER XXVI

SPORTS, OLD AND NEW

THE Netherlands have always been the home of sport. Their nobles were great huntsmen, and the forest of the Ardennes abounded in wild animals, including the wolf, until the close of the eighteenth century. Mary of Burgundy died from a fall from her horse out hawking, and the legends of the Ardennes revolve round the chase of the wild boar. The earliest popular sport was probably shooting at a mark with a crossbow, for the crossbowmen of Flanders were as famous as the archers of England. William Clito and Richard Cœur de Lion were both victims of the prowess of a crossbowman (*arbaletrier*) of Flanders. It is a remarkable proof of how old customs that have lost all utility survive to find a guild of crossbowmen still at Bruges; there used to be a guild of St. George, of which our Charles II was a member, flourishing in Hainaut. The first act demanded of a ruler after making his "joyous entry" was to shoot at the popinjay, and favourable auguries were drawn from his hitting the mark. Great was the joy, for instance, when the Infanta Isabella scored at the first trial on her arrival to establish what was expected to prove a national dynasty.

The Crossbowmen of Flanders.

Archery was very much practised in Hainaut in the Middle Ages, but whether the long bow was introduced into England from Hainaut, or whether the Hainauters borrowed it from their English comrades on many a stricken field may be left for the investigation of those who have leisure to make the necessary research. We have only to note that "confréries" of archers still exist at Mons, Quiesnoy, and other towns of Hainaut, and that it is no unusual sight to see on Sundays

The Archers of Hainaut.

and fête days m mbers of these societies attired in a jerkin and buskin with the plumed hat associated here with Robin Hood and carrying the old six-foot longbow. Curiously enough archery as a pastime does not seem to exist in Belgium. Modern Belgium, among the numerous games and sports it has borrowed from England, has not taken up this particular and picturesque game of skill.

The Game of the Ball.

Perhaps among the people the *jeu de bal* is as old as any game in Europe. It is played all over Belgium in the public squares, and even in the open streets of provincial towns. It is nothing more than hitting a small ball backwards and forwards between two players. The feature of the game is that each player holds a wooden bat or glove into which his hand is inserted. The weapon is called a glove (gant). As the material for this game is practically nothing at all it is not surprising to find it in general use. On fête days or at the different *kermesses* there are competitions for experts at the *jeu de bal* to which the commune and even the State give money prizes.

Pigeons.

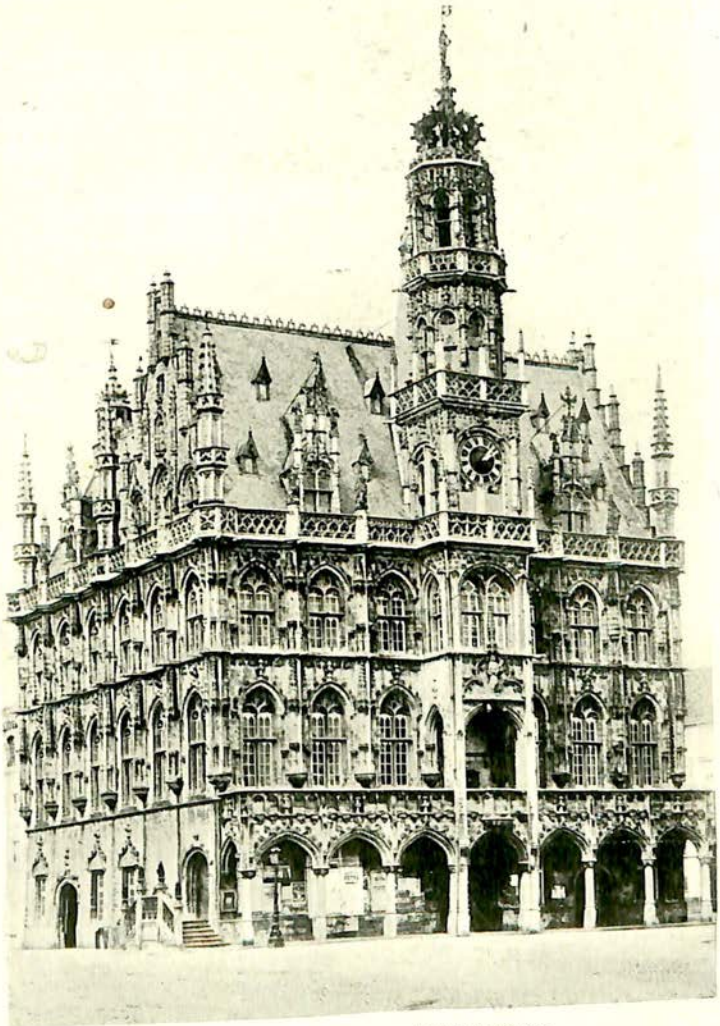
Another very old sport, still in general indulgence throughout Belgium, is pigeon-flying. Indeed, there is no sport more generally followed or more attractive to the masses. In some parts of the country it is said the Belgian working man divides his wages into three parts, one for the family, one for himself, and the third for his carrier pigeons. The extent to which the practice is indulged may be gathered from the fact that the railways receive £120,000 (3 million francs) a year for the carriage of the *panniers* (baskets) conveying pigeons to and from the places of meeting. Large prizes are offered by the different societies, and during the year considerable sums of money are won and lost in bets. The freeing of the birds at an important competition is a remarkable sight. At one held during the late Brussels Exhibition it was declared that as many as 100,000 birds were let loose at the same moment from the baskets of their owners.

In old days contests between rival parties mounted on stilts were a feature of life at Namur. The use of stilts there seems to have arisen from the prevalence of floods, and from the fact that by their means it was possible to cross the river Sambre when the stream was low. The old town of Namur was situated in the fork of the two rivers, and the new town was that which sprang up on the left bank of the Sambre. There was a keen rivalry between the two, and the opponents were called *échasseurs* because their battles were fought on stilts (*échasses*). To put a curb on the practice of constant irregular fighting it was arranged by the town authorities to hold a joust once a year on the Place St. Rémy (now the Place d'Armes) facing the Town Hall. The two factions, called the Melans for the old town and Avresses for the new, sent their chosen champions to the fray wearing distinctive costumes and colours, yellow and black for the Melans, and red and white for the Avresses. As a rule, the contestants were so skilful in either upsetting their opponents or falling themselves that they escaped any serious injury, but when the French revolutionists overran the country these jousts were abolished as a survival of feudalism and as not comporting with the gravity of the times.

Jousts on Stilts.

We come now to the introduction of what were essentially English sports into Belgium. About thirty years ago young Belgium in the great cities, such as Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges, took up football, hockey, and amateur competitions on the running-ground. It was done in a modest and diffident sort of way at first, and some supercilious English critics said of the early football teams that they were not sure what the game was. But that initial stage has passed away, and whatever his skill or success there is one characteristic common to all Belgian athletes. He is in real earnest. No hour is too early for him to get up and begin training; he is ever ready to join in a game or a trial. In fact he displays the

Football, etc.



HOTEL DE VILLE, AUDENARDE

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

old sporting spirit and go which were the monopoly of Englishmen. The contrast is furnished in Brussels by the young Englishmen who happen to reside in Brussels. They pass most of their time at the cafés and smoking cigarettes. It would be impossible to-day to get together in Brussels or the whole of Belgium an English side that could hold its own at either football or hockey with any of the leading Belgian college or club teams. This was not the case even fifteen years ago. Owing to the absence of suitable playing-fields cricket has not yet caught on in Belgium, but at the new club grounds in the Avenue Longchamp several first-rate pitches have been laid down and the game finds a few enthusiastic followers. But cricket is never likely to become as general in Belgium as football or hockey.

It is in boating, however, that young Belgium has made the most sensational progress, but in this particular matter Ghent must be regarded as standing for Belgium. Two boating clubs, the "Cercle Nautique de Gand" and the Royal Club of Ghent, were founded in the Flemish capital about twenty-five years ago, and the services of English trainers were engaged. The Scheldt at Ghent is a little superior to the Cam as a river and a little inferior to the Isis. The sport or recreation rapidly became very popular among the young Flemings, and under clever coaching they made great progress. About twenty years ago they began to compete with the Dutch at Amsterdam and the Germans at Hamburg. They began by holding their own, and after a time they scored some successes. These preliminaries instilled confidence into them, and at last, in 1898, they sent a crew to take part in Henley regatta.

Rowing.

This was thought rather audacious on their part, and, to tell the truth, the contestants thought so themselves, but "nothing venture nothing have." During the first few years of their appearing at Henley the Belgians gained no successes, but some observers remarked that each time they came they

Henley Achievements.

were gradually getting nearer. At last in 1905 they got into the final heat for the Grand Challenge Cup. In 1906 they scored their first victory carrying off the cup to Ghent where the victors were received with a public triumph. In 1907 they won again, and the cup was again carried off to the banks of the Scheldt. The Olympic games of 1908 witnessed the next struggle, and on this occasion a picked crew of the Leander Club wrested the cup from the Belgian visitors after a hard contest. But at the regatta of 1909 the Belgians were again victorious, no special effort having been made in this country to resist the invaders. In 1910 the Ghent clubs professed their inability to send a representative team and the cup was returned to England. Even if Belgium never scored again at Henley her representatives did enough for glory and to show that in whatever they take up they are doughty adversaries.

Swimming has long been a popular relaxation and swimming baths are to be found in most of the towns. The rivers are also utilised for floating baths.

Swimming.

Fencing is also much in vogue, and *cercles d'escrime* are numerous. The Belgians are not quite on a level with the French or possibly the Italians, but they are better than all other nations. Swedish gymnastics have latterly been introduced and are now compulsory in the army. A still more recent importation is golf, and first-rate links have been laid out near Antwerp. Speaking generally, sport and athletic games have been taken up with greater avidity and pursued with more energy and perseverance by the Flemings than the Walloons, but of course in the upper strata of society race does not tell at all. The temperament of the Walloon does undoubtedly make him more averse to great exertion than is the case with the Fleming.

This reservation does not apply, however, to anything that has to do with shooting game or riding horses. The Ardennes are part of the Walloon country, and here everyone

is more or less of a sportsman. For the magnate there are extensive preserves in which pheasants, wild duck, woodcock and deer of all kinds abound; for the rich there are the shooting rights in the communal woods, which can be rented; and for the people there is the free right in the river valleys to snare woodcock and snipe at certain periods. The principal delight of the sportsman is the wild boar battue which goes on through the winter. In the Campine region black game and partridge are found in large quantities, and in the late autumn the delicious tasting "grives" are captured by the thousand. There is a royal chasse at Villers sur Lesse, near Ciergnon, another at the château of the Amerois, and as King Albert is a good shot, like his father, the late Comte de Flandre, and his grandfather Leopold I, it is possible that the Ardennes will see more royal battues in the near future than they have at any former period. The provincial noblesse are rather conservative in their methods. For deer and boar they prefer a charge of slugs to the single bullet of a small bore rifle.

Wild Boar Hunting.

The Belgians generally take great pride in their horses. At Antwerp the heavy Flemish breed predominates, and iron-greys are rather in favour for private carriages. In Luxemburg, and Liége the Ardennais, a smaller breed than that of Flanders, but extremely handsome when pure bred, is most often met with. At Brussels English thoroughbreds and Irish hunters are most in demand. A Belgian gentleman is very dissatisfied if he cannot keep one horse, and most of the houses in the fashionable quarter have the *porte cochère*, which denotes that there is a stable in the rear. A house is then entitled to use the grander designation of an hôtel.

Love of Horses.

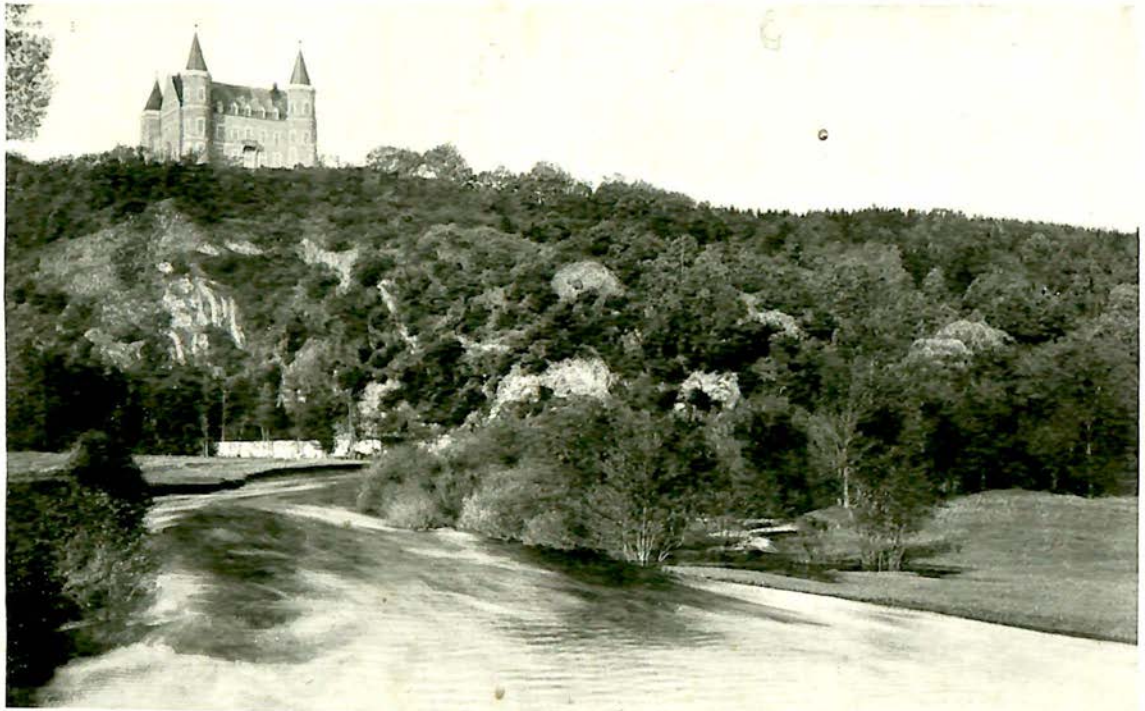
Within the last twenty years horse-racing has been introduced into Belgium. It began at Ostend and Spa as fashionable watering-places, with the view of attracting foreign visitors. After a time two race-courses were laid out for

Brussels, one at Boitsfort, near the Bois de la Cambre, the other at Groenendael, in the forest of Soignes. Both these places are picturesquely situated and well arranged. The fashionable world goes to Boitsfort in particular during the summer season, and the Avenue Louise is crowded with carriages, and latterly with motor-cars as well, on the occasion of the principal meetings. These are always held on Sundays, and as the prizes have been greatly increased in value, many sportsmen attend from Paris, and even from London. It is said that horse-racing has taken a strong hold on the Belgian mind, and that it has become a national pastime. But this is by no means certain. The majority of those who attend the races at Boitsfort go there simply to meet their friends and show off their dresses, and probably never make a bet. A subscription is taken for the whole season which reduces the charge of admission to each meeting to a very low figure. There are other race-courses in different parts of the country, but they are of minor importance and have no attractions for society. A large proportion of the horses were formerly imported from England, but the native-bred horse is coming to the front, and Belgium has started its own stud book.

Horse-Racing.

Horse-racing in Belgium has as many opponents as here, and the reformers who put down gambling in the casinos and clubs with a ruthless hand often declaim against the evils of the new importation. Although they are not likely to succeed in putting an end to horse-racing altogether, it seems probable that they will succeed in preventing its extension, and the number of meetings is not likely to increase. There is, besides, a stronger reason. The greater prizes to be gained on the French turf will always draw off the most ambitious and successful of owners of race-horses in Belgium.

Enough has been written to show that sport in all its branches and phases is in vigorous life and constant progression among all classes of the Belgian people.



Marischal *Rochefort*

CHÂTEAU OF CIERGNON ON THE LESSE, NEAR ROCHEFORT

CHAPTER XXVII

NATIONAL THRIFT

BELGIAN prosperity is due to many causes, but one of the principal is national thrift, and in no country is there a more marked tendency to effect *les petites économies* with a view of providing for the rainy day. Moreover, the State, realising the advantage to itself of this practice, has intervened to place all its influence and means at the disposal of those who wish to hoard their savings instead of squandering them. From the moment that the young Belgian enters the primary schools every inducement is placed before him to begin saving. Scholars are divided in the official returns into three categories—those who have a savings bank book, those who are qualifying to get one, and those who do not save.

Capacity for Saving.

The last category does not mean those who will not save, but the extreme poor, those who literally have nothing out of which savings can be taken. Habits thus formed in childhood endure through life, and the evils of improvidence are thus mitigated. In France, where the total capital far exceeds per head of population the amount reached in either Belgium or any other country, the great financial world has so perfected its machinery that the individual capitalist, which is really the French people *en masse*, can place his savings to the greatest possible advantage in large undertakings. The thrift of France is the true support of *la haute finance*. In Belgium the State has taken supreme control of the educational stage. It has provided a State Savings Bank, and it supervises those Provident societies which existed before it took up the work, for the benefit of *la petite finance*, which we might translate as "small investors."

Savings Banks.

There are in Belgium first of all the State Savings Bank (called the Caisse Générale d'Épargne), the business of which is transacted at the Head Post Office, the branch Post Offices throughout the Kingdom, the National Bank in Brussels, and its agencies throughout the country. There are sixty-six administrative offices in Belgium, and 1,094 branch post offices, transacting all the business of the Savings Bank including insurance. In addition to these are the special savings banks run by the four communes of Alost, Malines, Nivelles and Tournai. There are five private savings banks managed by special companies, and, finally, there are Professional Unions recognised by the State. The following tables show the activity of each division. Let us take the four communal Savings Banks first as they are the oldest in the country :—

COMMUNAL SAVINGS BANKS

	Year	Sums paid in	Sums drawn out	Balance, or deposit, at end of the year
Alost	1860	52,050	54,789	243,160
	1880	194,875	181,623	911,193
	1900	78,862	104,027	862,245
	1908	96,345	72,219	671,095
Malines	1850	4,338	6,303	50,004
	1880	512,675	382,007	2,095,064
	1900	164,033	162,857	969,917
	1905	wound up	800,452	204,430
Nivelles	1870	504,139	804,850	3,640,310
	1880	1,607,951	1,498,696	3,959,109
	1900	1,008,631	924,440	3,772,137
	1908	1,555,557	1,416,577	4,765,451
Tournai	1850	431,713	144,212	1,273,091
	1880	398,670	538,943	3,693,720
	1900	803,154	839,996	3,889,606
	1908	968,417	901,689	4,613,544

Of these Nivelles and Tournai alone show signs of any vigour, and the direct competition of the State has already proved too much for Malines, and seems likely to do so also for Alost.

We come next to the operations of the Savings Bank which combines pensions and insurance with the ordinary work of saving. The following statistics relate exclusively to the Savings department :—

Year	Offices	Total of Books at end of each year	Total Payments in at end of the year	Total Payments out at end of each year
1865	36	820	600,670	71,030
1880	784	53,154	179,037,531	53,939,249
1900	997	249,680	905,989,780	244,481,894
1908	1,160	301,227	1,250,545,421	364,304,680

In the last year the payments in amounted to fifty millions sterling and the drawings out to between fourteen and fifteen millions, leaving a rest of between thirty-five and thirty-six millions sterling.

In 1881 the practice of accepting postage stamps for opening fresh accounts was first adopted, and at the end of 1908 351,010 accounts had been opened in this manner.

The returns of the pension fund under the Post Office Savings Bank for 1908 show that 21,907 persons had reached the age of qualification for a pension, and that they received 2,023,781 francs in annuities. In the life assurance department depositors were insured for 68,048,736 in 1907, a total which had risen at the end of 1908 to 73,120,680 francs.

Scholars' Savings. The results of scholars' savings in the primary schools in 1908 were as follows :—

No. of Schools	With a Savings Bank	Total Scholars	With a Savings Book	Qualifying for one	Without one
10,340.	8,735	1,182,703	415,013	59,684	708,006

The total of savings in these infant schools had reached at the end of 1908 13,106,909 francs, or rather more than a pound a head.

The five savings banks belonging to private companies were, with the returns for 1908 :—

Company	No. of accounts open	Total payings in	Total payings out
Société Generale de Belgique	1,946	13,045,261	11,194,799
Banque Liégeoise ..	212	717,615	427,963
Banque de Huy ..	14	65,140	25,451
Mine of the Old Mountain	179	711,201	478,075
John Cockerill Company	149	1,450,711	1,102,632

Finally, 1,943 professional Unions are recognised as bodies entitled to co-operate for the benefit of their members in respect of savings funds, life insurance and pension, and to receive support from the State Savings Department.

Pawnshops.

In Belgium as in France pawnshops do not exist. Their place is taken by Monts de Piété, which are under State control. There are only fourteen of them for the whole of Belgium, and the tendency is to reduce the number. Although all are under State management there is not an uniform scale of interest. At Brussels and Liége the interest is only five per cent.; at Courtrai and Liesse it runs as high as fifteen. The total sums lent in the year 1908 amounted to 15,515,031, the maintenance of offices and staff came to 622,249, and the net profit to no more than 114,517 francs. The bulk of the pawning is done in Brussels, Antwerp, and Liége, which between them account for four-fifths of the total sum.

Setting up in Housekeeping.

The thrift of the Belgian people comes out in their way of living. Economy in trifles is practised everywhere, and no one who wishes to stand well in the estimation of his neighbours would think of incurring the charge of wastefulness. The great ambition of a Belgian citizen is to own his own house, and many of the middle class will not think of marrying until they can buy one. This may be effected by the marriage dot, or partly by that and a temporary loan to be paid off in a short term of years out of salary or earnings. In any case, the young people setting up housekeeping will not be content till they own their domicile. Then they have only to pay the "contributions," or rates which even in Brussels

HEAD OFFICES OF THE COCKERILL COMPANY AT SERAING,
FORMERLY THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE BISHOPS OF LIÉGE

(*By permission of the Cockerill Company*)

average no more than ten per cent. of the rent, including an abundant water supply from two sources, one for household use and the other for drinking purposes brought from the Bocq in the Ardennes.

Having obtained the house the next thing is its furnishing, and on this very little is spent in the first place, although no surer test can be applied of the growing prosperity of a family than to watch how the furniture improves in quality and increases in quantity. But even at the start one room must be furnished in the best way within the owner's means as a *salon de reception*. It is very little used, the less used the better from the point of view of preservation, but it is there for state occasions such as the christening of the first child, or the mistress' *anniversaire*, that is not her own birthday but the Saint's day whose name she bears. Into the living rooms of the house no visitor or even friend is ever admitted. They are always sparsely furnished and contain only necessary furniture. It is regarded as a great convenience if the room in which meals are taken is near the kitchen. Owing to the excellent and extensive service of electric trams in Brussels clerks and the employés in public departments can live at a good distance from the centre of the town, and much building of small houses has gone on of late years in the outer suburbs.

Furnishing the House.

Taking a superior grade in the social scale the character of the house will denote the prosperity or affluence of the owner. A very nice house can be bought for 50,000 francs, or £2,000, in Brussels. This, of course, means freehold or absolute possession. The rates will not exceed £20 a year. The reception rooms will consist of a salon and a *salle à manger*, generally *en suite*, but although these will be in frequent use when friends pay visits or are invited to partake of the owner's hospitality, there is always the living-room which is used when the family are alone. This practice has been explained to me as proof of the Belgian's desire to be very much at his ease.

The Well-to-do Classes.

In a house of this character a good deal of money will be expended on the furniture, but the most remarkable feature in a well-to-do Belgian's house is the richness of the interior decorations and the free use of expensive wood or marble. A house costing £2,000, which from the outside seems nothing extraordinary, may have had a second £2,000 spent on inner decorations, and contain furniture of the same value without including *objets d'art*. But if it is a Belgian who has gone to this expense it may be assumed as certain that he can very well afford it, and that the proportion of his income to house rent (or its equivalent) is far higher than would be the case in England.

The law of inheritance in Belgium is also of a nature to promote thrift, or rather to prevent the dissipation of property, because it makes the family possessions a common fund in which children have defined rights. The law treats the property of the father and mother as one. When either dies the whole property is valued and half goes to the survivor; the remaining half is divided in equal parts among the children. On the death of the other parent the second half, with whatever accretions he or she may have made to it in the interval, is subdivided among the children. The law is automatic, the children know the proportion in which they will benefit and the parents cannot alienate their property.

The Law of Inheritance.

That is the law of Belgium. It may be interesting to illustrate it by contrast with a case of considerable importance and notoriety which came before the Belgian Courts a few years ago, and which is generally misunderstood if not wilfully misrepresented. I refer to the case of the late King Leopold II and the Queen Marie Henriette. The Queen died in 1902, and if she had been the wife of an ordinary Belgian citizen holding their property in common, there is no question what would have happened on her death. Her fortune, which was very little, would have been added to the fortune of King Leopold, which was very great, the sum would

have been divided into two equal parts, one would have been left to the King, and the other would have been divided among his three daughters. But the King and Queen were not mere ordinary citizens; neither had they been married under the ordinary Belgian law. Their marriage contract was really on the footing of a treaty between the reigning families of Austria and Belgium. Interested parties refused to recognise the facts and a law suit followed. The matter was fought out in the courts at Brussels, and as there was no question as to the documents and the facts, no division of property occurred. Precisely the same thing had happened when King Leopold I lost his wife, Queen Louise, in 1850. There was no subdivision of property, and on that occasion there was no scandal in the law courts. Other questions arise from the distribution of the inheritance of King Leopold II, but as they are still *sub judice* they are not ripe for discussion, but as to the earlier case there is no room for doubt as to the judicial points involved and the soundness of the decision arrived at in the Brussels Court of Appeal.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A GLIMPSE INTO THE GRAND DUCHY

THE reader knows from the earlier chapters that Belgium represents a collection of feudal territories—some fiefs of France and others of the Empire, that is to say, the Holy Roman Empire, which expired in 1806—now forming the Nine Provinces. One of these is Luxemburg, first a countdom and then a duchy belonging to the famous house of that name, all the branches of which are extinct except the one that became merged in the illustrious French family of Montmorency. The entire province belonged to the Burgundian, Spanish and Austrian rulers of the other Belgian divisions, all held in common by right of descent from Mary of Burgundy. It formed part of Walloon Belgium by a natural union of race, religion and language. Under the Dutch rule, from 1815 to 1830, the province was still left intact, but its sovereignty was vested in the King as a member of the Germanic Confederation. When the Belgian Revolution broke out in August, 1830, it involved the whole of Luxemburg, which passed into the possession of the Belgian patriotic party with the exception of the fortress of Luxemburg itself, then one of the strongest places in Western Europe. The existence of that fortress was probably the determining fact that led to the break up and subdivision of the province.

Luxemburg Province.

The Twenty-four Articles of 1831, which eventually became the Treaty of 19th April, 1839, divided Luxemburg into two parts, the northern falling to Belgium and the southern being formed into a Grand Duchy, which was to be the personal possession of the family of Orange-Nassau, the family ruling in Holland. From 1839 to 1890 the Grand Duchy and Holland

Division of the Province.

were under the same government, but on the death of William III, without male heir, the Salic law, or rather the Nassau family law, came into operation, and the Grand Duchy passed to his cousin, the Duke Adolphus, who reigned till 1905, and then had as his successor the present Duke William, who is the last male representative of his race. Fortunately the family law foresaw the possibility of such a situation, and laid down that failing all male heirs the right should pass to the nearest female in kin. The legislative council of Luxemburg has endorsed this arrangement by a special decree, and the young princess Mary has been recognised and proclaimed to be her father's heir and future successor.

The Luxemburg Question.

One other matter affecting the status of Luxemburg calls for description. In 1867 Europe was threatened with what was called the Luxemburg Question, and it was only by the very decided intervention of the British Government that war was averted. A conference was held in London, and resulted in the recognition of Luxemburg as a neutral State while the fortress was dismantled. Since that event the Grand Duchy has had no army, and its customs have been collected by German officials. Before 1867 it was a member of the Germanic Confederation and since that year it is included in the German Zollverein. The Grand Duchy ought by all natural laws to have formed part of Belgium, and would have done so but for the short-sightedness of the English and French ministers in 1831-9. To-day nothing less than a complete reversal of the existing order of things in Western Europe can prevent its being absorbed by Germany.

Iron Mines.

Thanks to the discovery of rich iron and coal-mines in the south-west district of the Duchy, more especially in the valley of the Alzette, Luxemburg is a very prosperous little State and has lost something of the primitive character that belonged to it when it was generally regarded as a mere prolongation of the Ardennes. In those days people visited it partly for its

fishing, partly for its religious processions, and partly because an economical holiday could be passed amid scenery which had been made famous by the pen of Victor Hugo who selected Luxemburg for his place of exile before fixing on Jersey. These attractions remain, and the visitor to Diekirch, Vianden, Clervaux, and Echternach need never perceive that the duchy possesses "a black country," in which the Italian mining colony stands out in striking contrast with the people of the soil.

The four places named attract their faithful clientele from Belgium and the Prussian Eiffel every season, and a still more limited band of English enthusiasts have followed. The fishing in the Sure and its tributaries the Our and the Wiltz is superior to that obtainable in the Belgian Ardennes, and there are greater facilities in sport for the casual visitor. This explains why many visitors pass direct to the duchy without stopping to explore the Belgian Ardennes. Besides, the Luxemburg hotelier understands better than his Belgian rival the art of advertisement and *réclame*. Mondorf on the Moselle and Diekirch on the Sure are far more skilfully boomed in the tourist publications than, let us say, Bouillon or La Roche. There is another attraction about the Grand Duchy to which the Belgian Ardennes can lay no claim. It contains many highly interesting ruins from the archæological point of view of the Roman, Frank and mediæval ages.

The Sure and its Tributaries.

It is a curious but remarkable fact that there are very few interesting monuments of antiquity in the Belgian division of the province. Apart from Bouillon, which is unique, there is only La Roche and Montaigle, both mere shells. The Romans held the province and one of their main roads, that to Aix-la-Chapelle by Nassogne, traversed it, but no remains of the occupation have yet been unearthed. The Emperor Justinian twice resided at Nassogne, from which he dated three of his Constitutions, but no trace has been found of the villa which must have

Roman Rule.

existed there. On the high ground between Rochefort and Jemelle there are some partially unearthed foundations of a building called locally a Roman building, but they have been left in supreme neglect to moulder and decay. The neglect of man more than the ravages of war explains why the Ardennes region has been stripped bare of its past relics in stone or brick. When for any reason a feudal building was deserted the peasants hastened to turn the material to use for their own residences. This proceeding has been stopped, but, on the other hand, little or nothing has been done in respect of restoration, and absolutely nothing at all in the direction of excavation.

In contrast with the barrenness in this respect of the Belgian Ardennes, where nature alone is to be admired, the Grand Duchy is covered with ruined castles, abbeys, and churches which attract the archæologist and antiquarian. The Cistercian abbey of Clairefontaine, the old castle of the Lannoy family at Clervaux, half a ruin, half a habitable residence, the ruined castles of Schiebourg, Bourscheid and Esch, the palatial castles of Schönfels and Meysembourg, the grand ruins of the castle of the Nassau family at Vianden, and many others too numerous to name, all contribute to invest the Grand Duchy with an interest that does not offer itself in the Belgian Luxemburg.

Famous Ruins.

Clervaux is famous for more than its castle. It was the scene of the only Luxemburg rising against the French republicans in 1798. The French occupation of the whole province was effected without resistance after the Austrian evacuation of the Low Countries following Jemmappes, and no one has ever been able to give a plausible reason why the peasants of the Oesling valley, in which Clervaux lies, should have suddenly formed the decision that they would put an end to the French occupation. The local disaffection arose from the operation of the law of conscription, but as the peasants

The Cudgel War.

were unarmed they would have been wiser to have shown submission. With nothing better than cudgels they prepared to resist the French recruiting officers. At the last moment they were joined by a few gamekeepers and local sportsmen armed with muskets, and when the French arrived they were fired upon and some twenty of their soldiers fell before the volley. Alarmed at their own success those with guns either fled into Germany or concealed their weapons. When the French returned in force they seized all upon whose premises or person cudgels were found. Many were shot on the spot, many others were conveyed to Luxemburg to be guillotined. The rising is still called that of the *Klippels Armee* (Cudgel Army), and a memorial column bears the names of the peasants of Oesling whose lives were given in vain for their little country.

The Nassau Castle.

Of all places in the Grand Duchy Vianden is by general consent the most picturesque and interesting. The castle ruins cover the whole of the rocky eminence on the slopes of which is situated the little town. Originally the town itself was included in the *enceinte*, and portions of the two gates remain. The inner wall with its Weissenthurm—white tower—remains in a fairly perfect condition. The castle itself, part of which goes back to the thirteenth century, displays three lofty towers, all more or less dilapidated. The fine Knights' hall (*ritter saal*) is 120 feet by 35 feet, and below it is a chamber of the same size which in old days was used as a guard-room and kitchens. In the hall itself are two large fireplaces. The windows are beautifully formed in early pointed. Tacked on to the older castle is the residence of the Nassau family, built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The chapel, with gargoyles of dragons' heads, is another interesting building. The dungeons are numerous; one of them, little more than a well twenty feet deep, is said to have been reserved for those dealing in sorcery. It is called the Hexenloch, or "sorcerers' pit."

In old days, Vianden had a regular constitution, and its citizens were divided into three classes, nobles, free citizens and boors. There were eight noble families, and the citizens were divided into three guilds, viz., drapers, shoemakers and watchmakers. Vianden is specially interesting because it was the possession of William the Silent, who inherited it from his ancestor, Otho of Nassau, who married the last Countess of Vianden in 1350. Philip II confiscated Vianden and gave it to his general, Ernest de Mansfeld, but it is curious to note that when peace was made between Spain and the Netherlands in 1609 Vianden was restored to the House of Nassau. Under Napoleon it belonged for a time to his general, Baron Marbœuf, whose memoirs are well known. Some attempts have been made to keep the ruins in repair, but much remains to be done if the main part of the castle is to be preserved.

Vianden.

Luxemburgers are very proud of their Roman monument, which gives proof of their connection with the Empire. This is a memorial pillar to the Goddess Diana, much mutilated by the act of man as well as the passage of eighteen centuries. The following inscription is clearly visible at its base :—

Memorial to Diana.

"Deae Dianae
Q. Postumius
Potens. V. S."

but of the figure only the feet, some drapery, and the lower part of an animal remain. It is situated at Bollendorf, not far from Echternach.

Mention of Echternach will serve to introduce what is after the capital the best known perhaps of all Luxemburg townlets. It is known for its connection with St. Willebrod, the Anglo-Saxon saint who converted the people of the province to Christianity in the eighth century, for its fine Abbey Church, and above all for its dancing procession on Whit-Tuesday in each year.

St. Willebrod was a fervent Christian, and he is rather suspected of having incited his converts to show their zeal by destroying the old Roman temples, that to Diana among them. Time may have exacted a retribution when his own Abbey Church was converted into a factory of silk bobbins at the end of the eighteenth century. It was rescued from this ignominious fate seventy years ago, and has been carefully restored, minus, however, two of the four towers which once crowned it. During the restoration of the building much of the original church of the eighth century was excavated and the fine crypt of the eleventh century was cleared of the debris under which it was buried. St. Willebrod was not buried, however, in the Church of the Abbey where he lived and ministered so long, but in that of St. Pierre, where his shrine has been for centuries and is still the bourne of numberless pilgrims. The Church of St. Pierre is, therefore, the one closely associated with the dancing procession which constitutes the fame and attraction of Echternach.

A Saxon Saint.

Not long after the death of Bishop Willebrod Luxemburg was visited by the cattle plague, and it was a popular belief in those days that the only way to restore the animals affected was for the men and women to imitate them by dancing and jumping about. The plague was not arrested by these steps, and then it was proposed that a chosen band of "holy dancers" (*der springenden heiligen*) should proceed to St. Willebrod's shrine and make an offering. The result of this proceeding was considered to be the staying of the plague, and the practice has been followed ever since for over 1,100 years. It is admitted that some years the pilgrimage, or procession, was not held, but then it is recorded that the omission was promptly punished by the recurrence of the plague. It is so many years since the last omission that no one attempts to assign to it a date.

The Dancing Procession.

THE PULPIT IN ANTWERP CATHEDRAL.

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

The dancing procession in its modern dress, which distinguishes it from the more austere presentment of the Middle Ages, is one of the prettiest sights that could be imagined. The participants reveal sometimes the fatigue natural from their severe physical exercise, but none of the frenzy of religious zeal in a high state of exaltation. The procession is formed on Prussian territory, across the bridge over the Sure, and many participants come from the Eiffel, where the people are as good Catholics as in the Duchy. All that region was subject to the Luxemburg princes centuries before Prussia was thought of, and St. Willebrod's fame is not restricted by present-day frontiers.

About nine in the morning of Whit-Tuesday, those who intend joining the procession form up on the eastern side of the bridge, the clergy await them on the western, and when the signal is given the priests, with their attendant acolytes, lead the way. The bridge and its approaches are fifty yards across, from the bridge to the Church of St. Pierre through the main street of the town 1,200 mètres (1,310 yards nearly) have to be traversed, and the dancers have to move three steps forward at a time and then take two backwards. For each five steps they take then they move forward only one; for the 1,200 mètres they come 6,000. The procession is formed seven in a line, and the dancers keep together by holding pocket-handkerchiefs or scarves between them. Along the route, which is crowded, firemen are stationed to pick up those who fall, and the spectators exhort the dancers to persevere to the end.

The end is the hardest part of the ordeal, for the Church of St. Pierre stands on a slight eminence which is reached by sixty-two steep steps. Even here the processionists, after mounting three steps, have to retrace two, and the steps are worn and hollowed by the countless pilgrims of many centuries. The procession ends in front of the Saint's shrine, and by that time the dancers, who include persons of all ages from youth to old age and members of both sexes, are quite exhausted

by their four miles of hopping. After the ceremony a popular fête is held for the amusement of the twenty thousand visitors who flock into the town on these occasions. The pilgrimage, or procession, is probably the oldest of its kind still existing in Europe, and the fervour of the participants, like the interest of the spectators, shows no sign of abatement.

International Status.

Although the Grand Duchy could not be described as an important State, its position on the map of Europe between the great dominions of France and Germany invests its international status with a special significance which at once strikes the eye. Declared neutral by the London Conference of 1867, it prolongs the belt of neutral territory formed by Belgium alone to the banks of the Moselle. It might have been thought that Germany's acquisition of Alsace and part of Lorraine would have conduced to the preservation of Luxemburg's favoured position as a neutral country, and certainly there is no reason whatever to suspect France of an intention to violate it.

Economic rather than political questions are likely to undermine its position. The navigation of the Moselle, which is connected with the French river Cher and French canals, has become a rather thorny problem owing to the German pretention to control the stream and to impose such regulations as may seem better in Berlin than they do at Luxemburg on its navigation. This is a very serious matter for French mine owners in the Vosges who have hitherto sent much of their output down the Moselle. At the same time, this question of a free waterway notwithstanding, the neutrality of the Grand Duchy seems to be exposed to fewer perils than that of its Belgian neighbour.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE COLONIAL QUESTION

BELGIUM having been provided with a magnificent colony in the vast Congo region, not by her own merit or efforts, but by the cleverness, courage, and pertinacity of her great ruler, Leopold II, there are two points of view from which her position as a Colonial Power may be regarded. The first is as to her capacity to retain what she did not acquire by national merit or achievement, and the second is as to how far an African dependency can be successfully governed by a small parent State which has been compelled by the force of opinion and pressure from outside to accept conditions of perfection far in advance of what I would call the chronometrical stage that has been reached in the development of the African problem.

Leopold II Acquires the Congo.

I must clinch this point to make the differentiation in my argument clear. Belgium is a small Power, she cannot escape from the position under any conceivable circumstances. The meaning of this applied to practical affairs is that she will be held more rigidly than others to the literal execution of her own programme defined by the principles of somebody else. I foresee grave troubles ahead for Belgium in this direction, and so far as I have means of judging, Belgian authorities do not appreciate them. A Great Power like England may have the finest principles placed at the head of her African programme, but who is to control her if she interpret them in her own way? Belgium has adopted those principles, but she will be kept to them. Her range of licence and liberty in judgment and action are restricted. However, let us serious students of that dark and menacing African problem only rejoice that for a time at least the

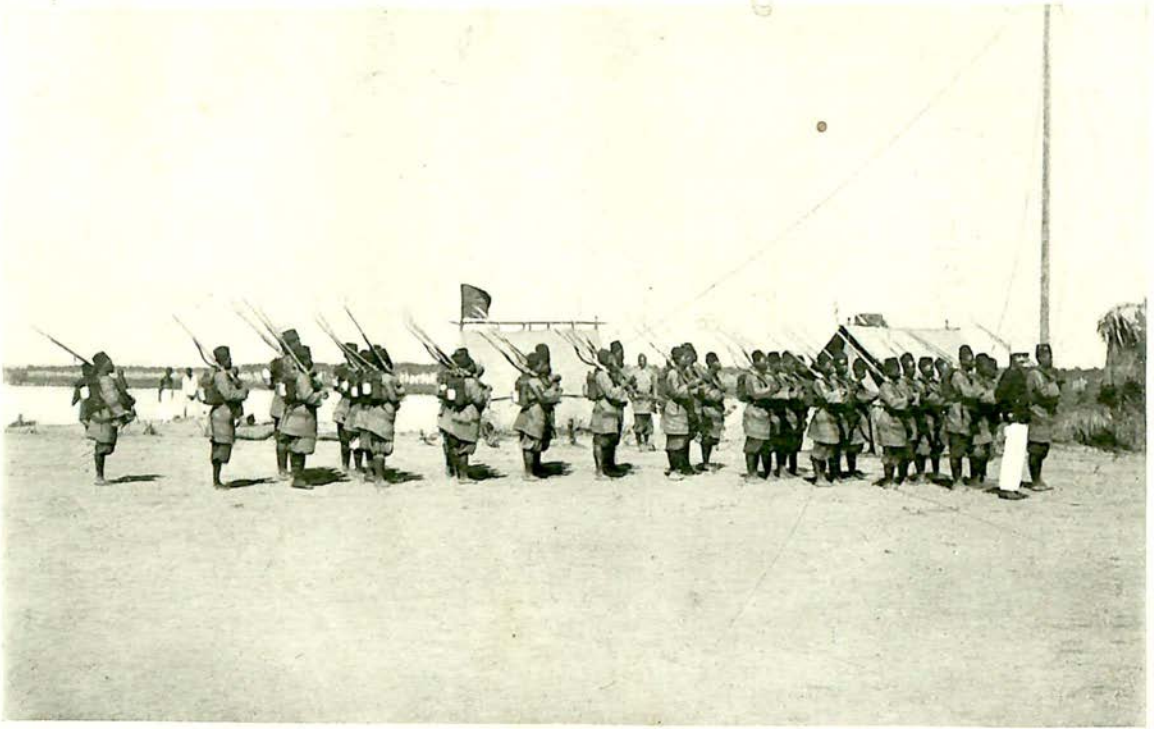
Congo controversy has been laid at rest and that one may write the name without fear of being denounced as a partisan.

We have been told that the Belgians are not a colonising people. It might be rejoined that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when colonising by the European Powers began, the Dutch took good care that they should not become one. In the eighteenth century the debut of the Ostend Company was so promising that its English rival took very effective measures to cut short its life. About sixty years ago Leopold I began to point out that Belgium was growing so fast at home that she must look about for possessions across the oceans. She was exhorted to look about not merely for fresh markets, but for points of vantage that would secure fresh markets eventually. She made attempts in Guatemala, Formosa, and elsewhere. Nothing, however, came of them. In 1875, ten years after the second Leopold came to the throne, Belgium was without a colonial possession, and her flag was unknown outside French and English harbours.

The Ostend Company.

The change that then took place was due to the happy inspiration of the King of the Belgians to concentrate his attention on the African slave trade question which had been brought to the front by the efforts of Sam Baker, Richard Burton, and David Livingstone. But at that moment nothing was known of the heart of Africa, and more particularly as to how it might be reached from the West Coast. It was, therefore, a very appropriate subject for a Geographical Conference, and King Leopold seized the opportunity to invite the qualified authorities to hold it in Brussels. That was the first stone on the road to an African dominion. The second was the securing and monopolising of the services of Stanley when he attempted in vain to interest a jaded England in the discovery of the great river which furnished a water highway across the breadth of Africa. King Leopold was neither tired nor obtuse. He secured Stanley's services till the end

The Slave Trade.



CONGOLESE TROOPS

of the century by a handsome retainer. It is needless to dwell on the untiring energy with which he created a chain of stations across the Congo valley, and obtained from the native chiefs treaties ceding to him their sovereign rights to whose validity a British Commissioner in 1884 was constrained to give reluctant testimony.

The Berlin Conference.

When the African Conference met at Berlin towards the end of that year the Powers were confronted with a *fait accompli*. King Leopold had constructed a sort of dominion. He was at least the man in possession. Who was going to turn him out? Prince Bismarck and the French Government were determined that it should not be England. The Conference ended then with the legalising of the Belgian ruler's position in the international sense, and by clever negotiation with the neighbouring States he extended that position over a vast area of Africa far beyond the widest limits explored by either Stanley or any Belgian lieutenant. In less than eight years Leopold II had acquired a colony as large as Europe, omitting Russia. He acquired it almost without firing a shot, and the diplomatists, dazed by his audacity, left the Prussian capital with the secret solace, "Well, he will never keep it!" They were wrong; he did.

Belgian Timidity.

The King's achievement was too great for his own subjects. In Brussels the gift of a ready-made colony was received with fear and anxiety. Had it been a little one it might have been accepted on the ground that it did not mean much, that its possession could not possibly offend anyone, and that in the course of time the Belgian people might adapt themselves to the new situation. But this colony, brought back by the King's plenipotentiaries in their portfolio, was almost a continent, a pearl of great price among Tropical lands, and a recent bone of contention among Great Powers. The Belgians of 1885 would have nothing to do with the gift. Their Constitution was passed for home use. They preferred the freedom from

anxiety without a colony, to unknown trouble and worry with one. They candidly admitted their ignorance in the matter, and professed no avidity to learn. The most they would do was to assent to their King taking the problem on his own shoulders as Sovereign of the Congo, and in that capacity he ruled it from 1885 to 1908.

It would be quite outside the purpose of this chapter to describe even in summary those twenty-three years of personal rule. What concerns our present topic is to note that Belgian opinion underwent a complete change on the subject in that period. Three main causes contributed to modify the views of 1885, and to convert the indifference of that year into the pride and pleasure of owning a valuable possession which was the dominant sentiment in 1908. These causes were the sacrifice of many noble Belgians' lives in the Arab campaigns, the sinking of a considerable sum of money by the several grants in aid made by the Belgian Government to the Congo, and the evidence acquired as to the great wealth of the African possessions in vegetable and mineral produce. For these reasons the Belgian public were not merely willing but in a hurry to take off their King's hands the Colony at which they had looked askance a quarter of a century before. Not British criticism but Belgian pressure compelled King Leopold to surrender the separate rôle of absolute monarch in Africa which in his closing years he undisguisedly hoped to retain with life.

Change of Opinion.

When the Belgian Government and Parliament in 1908 took over the Congo State they became for the first time a Colonial Power, and as they introduced at once a new system and new principles the experiment was invested with double interest. While some critics have been complaining, unreasonably as every candid person will admit, that the new system has not been introduced with sufficient rapidity to please them, I would draw attention here and also in Belgium to some practical

The New Colony.

matters that in moments of keen controversy escape notice. The first matter is the probability of Belgium's succeeding as well in her colonising mission under the new laws as King Leopold did by his own will in defiance of everybody. If she does not succeed in her mission she will place her colony in graver jeopardy than it was in, let me say, in 1904, when the British Government was inclined to push matters to extremities. For the Belgian people the motto should be "Success at all costs."

For running a colony successfully during the stages when it is admitted that it cannot pay its way on its own resources two things are necessary, men and money. Under King Leopold an equilibrium had after the first fifteen years of recurrent deficit, been established by the profits made by the concessionaire companies, and in the, let us say, last ten years of personal rule a large surplus had been derived from the produce of the Congo plantations. But the concessions have been cancelled, the companies have disappeared, and the Government finds at its immediate disposal a very limited as well as uncertain revenue. This revenue is for the present quite disproportionate to the work that has to be performed. As Belgian public opinion had to be coaxed and propitiated in every way to make the taking over of the Congo as nearly unanimous as possible, one of the official assurances given was that it would cost the country nothing. The Congo was a sound going concern with a good surplus. At the moment when this was said the statement was perfectly true, but the institution of reforms has eliminated, as we shall see, some of the most profitable and easily garnered sources of revenue.

An Uncertain Revenue.

The new Colonial Minister, M. Renkin, whose zeal in the cause of reform on the Congo deserves full recognition, realised the position, and his first budget was remarkable for the boldness with which, ignoring the possibility of a deficit, he sanctioned an expenditure far exceeding anything attempted

M. Renkin.

by his predecessors. As the reward of his courage the price of rubber rose on the international market by over sixty per cent., thus averting the necessity of issuing a new Colonial loan.

The Last Budget.

The Budget for 1909 was fixed at 36,119,536 francs, but as this was a transition year, the finances of the new regime really commence with the year 1910. The ordinary expenditure for 1910 was estimated in the Budget at 40,370,814 francs, and the extraordinary at 33,516,775. The extraordinary expenditure was to be provided for by the issue of Treasury Bonds running for a period of not more than five years. It was estimated that the ordinary revenue would bring in 39,745,305, thus leaving only a small deficit. The principal items of regular expenditure are set forth as follows :—

Administration in Africa	7,034,410	francs
Public Force (military)	7,212,200	,,
Marine (transport)	2,023,880	,,
Health	826,200	,,
Public Works	944,500	,,
Customs and Fiscal Service	2,133,595	,,
Agriculture	1,641,945	,,
Mines	1,165,050	,,
Upkeep of Domain	5,246,280	,,
Justice	1,840,480	,,
Service of the Debt	6,530,081	,,

The items of the extraordinary expenditure include the following :—

Creation of Agricultural and Breeding Establishments	2,000,000	francs
Divers Public Works	16,927,900	,,
Katanga Subsidy	1,500,000	,,
Occupation of lands in Katanga	4,000,000	,,
New Battery at Shinkakassa	2,000,000	,,
New Boats	1,726,650	,,
Second Annuity of Special Fund for 50,000,000 francs to King Leopold	3,300,000	,,

With regard to the last-named item, King Albert, declining to derive any personal benefit therefrom, caused the first annuity to be treated as the nucleus of a Pension Fund for those who have served on the Congo, which was greatly needed, and the second to be applied in the purchase of steamers. The principal items of revenue were the following :—

A Pension Fund.

Customs	7,056,555	francs
Ivory (sale of)	3,146,000	,,
Rubber (sale of)	13,397,500	,,
Rubber (tax on)	1,295,000	,,
Mines	2,520,000	,,
Native taxes	2,000,000	,,

As compared with the figures of 1909, mines and ivory show an increase, and rubber, despite its higher market value, a decrease. Customs show a rise of fifteen per cent., and the new export duty promises to prove a valuable addition to the revenue. For the first time, too, a tax paid by the natives in cash figures in the record.

The public debt of the Congo in 1910 amounted to 120,835,200 (bonds actually issued), and the interest for the year to about 4,600,000 francs, while 1,930,081 figured for redemption.

Allowing for the fact that several of the sources of revenue are of an expanding order and that the assets left by the late administration are likely to prove of great value, the financial outlook for the Congo Colony is bright and encouraging. It ought not to be very long before the Government will be able to raise the sum expended in Africa to two millions sterling per annum.

A Bright Outlook.

We come now to the question of the men. In 1909 the total staff of officials in Africa numbered 1,636. They were subdivided as follows :—

The Public Service.

Governor-General	1
Vice Governor-Generals	3
State Inspectors	4

Commander of Public Force ..	1
Secretaries	5
Magistrates	60
Commissioners, etc.	31
Chiefs of Zone	55
Officers of Force	175
Engineers	20
Doctors, etc.	47
Postal Services	41
Captains of Steamers	51
Forest Service, etc...	54
Unspecified	1,088
Total	1,636

In addition to the strictly State service 213 were employed on the Great Lakes railways, and seventy-six under the Katanga Special Committee, which is in political charge of that province. These officials are not exclusively Belgians. This will be understood when it is stated that there were in all only 1,722 Belgians in the whole of the Congo in 1908, and included in this total are at least 322 priests, sisters of mercy, women and children. The proportion of Belgians to non-Belgians seems to be about sixty per cent. For instance, of the sixty magistrates in the last table thirty-five were Belgians, eleven Norwegians, nine Italians, one Dane, one Roumanian, one French and two Swiss.

White Population of the Congo.

The slow and slight increase in the white population of the Congo is a disturbing and discouraging fact. The following table gives the number of Belgians and non-Belgians in the years named :—

Year	Belgians	Non-Belgians	Total
1900	1,318	886	2,204
1901	1,465	881	2,346
1902	1,417	948	2,365
1903	1,442	1,041	2,483
1904	1,410	1,101	2,511
1905	1,501	1,134	2,635
1906	1,587	1,173	2,760
1907	1,713	1,230	2,943
1908	1,722	1,217	2,939

Among non-Belgians the numerical order of nationalities was

Swedes	190
Italians	181
Portuguese	143
Dutch	119
English	118
Swiss	90
Germans	63
Americans	55
Russians	55
French	51
Norwegians	48
Danes	29
Grand Duchy	29
Greeks	11
Austrians	9
Australians	8
Canadians	8
Transvaalers	5
Turks	1
Servians	1
Mexicans	1
Bulgarians	1
Argentina	1
	1,217

Of these the British subjects and the Americans are either missionaries, or engineers and prospectors. There are none in the State service. The Portuguese, Germans, Greeks, and minor divisions are traders. The Swedes, Italians, Norwegians, Danes and Swiss are exclusively in the State service —so are the majority of the Dutch, French and Luxembourgeois. At one time there were over 500 Italian officers in the State service, but the pay was low and there was no chance of promotion, so the majority resigned and retired on the expiration of their first engagement. The point of these statistics is that at least forty per cent. of the 1,636 functionaries, from the highest to the lowest grade, are non-Belgians and have to be recruited where they can be obtained. It has always been the practice of the Belgians to refrain from

engaging either French or Germans, and although Englishmen were utilised in the early years none have been employed for a very long time, and it is unlikely that any will be engaged in the future. The idea is that citizens of small States are the most suitable for another small State to employ, and the services rendered by the Scandinavians, Danes, and Swiss have been invaluable and beyond all praise.

The Belgian Element.

The Congo having become a Belgian colony it is natural that one of the principal objects of the new administration should be to make the service more and more exclusively Belgian, and with this object in view the salaries for those serving in Africa have been raised to an amount sufficient to attract fully-qualified men. The new pension scheme is also another attraction. While the special services, like the transport, can be left to non-nationals (the captains of the steamers are exclusively Scandinavians), the tendency to place the general civil and military administration in the hands only of Belgians will become more marked. The officers of justice are, however, likely to remain of mixed nationalities as at present, for it is considered that this intermixture gives the Courts a greater appearance of impartiality. At all events, the remorseless critic cannot get up an agitation against Belgian judges in the Congo when they sit with a Norwegian or an Italian beside them.

Another great reform is the careful selection of the volunteer for the Congo before he is allowed to proceed to Africa.

Improved System.

Formerly a man had only to offer to go out to be accepted and shipped off at once. It is quite certain that such a candidate possessed no special aptitude for work in the Tropics, and it was a miracle if he turned out to be any good at all. This description applies to the rank and file, and not to the comparatively few officers of the Belgian army who went out on "special mission" and helped to raise the tone of the service generally. It is now hoped to raise the standard all round to a level

with the special men under the old system. There is another improvement. Formerly the men sent out were untrained; if it were the case of a second engagement and the applicant had a good record it was a cause of much rejoicing, for it was realised that someone useful had been secured.

But now this loose system has been radically altered; yet it is only fair to say that the change began under the late King who founded, in the last years of his rule, the School of Tropical Medicine in Brussels, the Colonial College, the Colonial Museum at Tervueren, and the World-School, which was to have been at the same place. All these institutions, with the exception of the last named, which has been temporarily dropped, are in active work. No doctor or veterinary surgeon is allowed to go to the Congo until he has passed through the School of Tropical Medicine, in connection with which there is a hospital at Watermael for invalids from the Congo. The student has therefore training in practice as well as in theory. There were forty doctors at this school in 1909, of whom twenty-three were Italians, thirteen Belgians, two Norwegians, one English and one French. Their special study is the treatment of the terrible malady called "sleeping sickness."

New Institutions.

In the year named the course at the Colonial College was followed by twenty-five commissioned officers, eighty-three clerks and former agents and nineteen non-commissioned officers. The consequence of this improved system is not merely that trained men are now sent out in lieu of untrained, but that the candidates themselves take a more serious view of their mission. Formerly men went to the Congo to a large extent to escape from debt; now it is to begin a fine career. Evidence of the change is already visible in the returns of mortality among officials. The percentage of deaths is little more than half what it was a few years ago—the figures being 4·60 per cent. in 1908 as against 7·9 in 1901. The tours of King Albert and M. Renkin through the Congo were

The Colonial College.

specially intended to demonstrate that a visit to Central Africa did not cut short one's life, and their example could not fail to embolden the timid.

The Colonial Museum at Tervueren is a splendid monument of the successful work accomplished on the Congo.

The Colonial Museum.

The building is a magnificent structure placed in one of the most charming spots round Brussels, and the collection gives a complete picture of the ethnology, fauna, and natural products of Central Africa. Admirably arranged by its distinguished Director, Baron de Haulleville, author of the best work on the colonising aptitudes of his fellow-countrymen, the student of the development of the Dark Continent will find here the most instructive object lesson that could be desired. The *Annales*, or journal, published periodically under the Director's editorship, contain information of a high scientific value.

There is one question connected with the Belgian Congo of great interest. Can it be made a White Man's Colony?

A White Man's Colony?

For the greater part of the territory which is sub-tropical the idea is not entertained, but in the southern provinces, notably Katanga, the conditions of climate and surroundings approximate to those of Rhodesia. Here the discoveries of great mineral riches provide an attraction to the immigrant that does not exist in any other part of the Belgian colony. The pioneers of the mining movement have never ceased to represent that Katanga could maintain a large white resident population, but the Government has been obliged to proceed with great circumspection, more especially because there is one undeniable peril. This is the presence of the tse-tse fly. Even the parts of Katanga where it is not found are often rendered inaccessible by being environed by tse-tse infected districts through which cattle could not pass. The Government has established some experimental farms in districts immune from the scourge, and has lately sent out a small

THE CONGO MUSEUM AT TERVUEREN

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colony composed of constabulary to form the nucleus of a white settlement. But it is a question that can only be settled by care and caution, and perhaps not at all until the tse-tse fly has been exterminated or cattle successfully innoculated against its at present deadly sting.

The following are the statistics of trade for 1909 and the previous five years. This table shows only the "*commerce special*," that is to say, exports of Congo produce and imports for use or consumption in the Congo. There is in addition a large transit trade, chiefly to the French Congo, with which we need not trouble the reader.

Trade Returns.

Year	Imports	Exports
1904	23,344,000 francs	51,891,000 francs
1905	20,075,000 ,,	53,032,000 ,,
1906	21,478,000 ,,	58,278,000 ,,
1907	25,182,000 ,,	58,895,000 ,,
1908	26,586,000 ,,	43,372,000 ,,
1909	22,126,994 ,,	56,167,000 ,,

The decline in the exports of 1908 was due to the fall in the market value of rubber, and the recovery in 1909 to the rise in price to its old figure or even higher. Belgium provided or took herself in 1909 15,506,690 of the imports and 52,085,699 of the exports. Taking a general view of the commercial situation over a period of the last six years the progress is minute, but this should be regarded as evidence not of the limited resources of the Congo colony, but of the deliberate purpose of the Belgian authorities under both regimes to proceed with great care and caution. Those who have studied the colonial problem in Belgium hold the opinion that the success so far achieved has been due to the guiding principles of not attempting too much. Still the weak points in the situation remain (1) the small white colony all told, (2) the uncertainty as to the revenue, (3) and the apparent non-expansion of trade.

Under the new conditions created by the cancelling of the charters of the Concessionnaire Companies, the abolition

of forced labour, and the substitution of payment in money instead of payment in goods to the blacks, it will be more difficult to establish an equilibrium in the finances. The surest way of doing so is to multiply the resources of the colony, which can only be accomplished by the introduction of foreign capital into the country. The Belgians, whose success up to the present has been far greater than anyone could have ventured to predict in 1884, have now to decide whether they will encourage outside co-operation in dealing with the development of Central Africa, or continue to run it on the old exclusive lines. The opening of the several zones to free trade, which will be completed in another year, is an indication that co-operation will be invited and no longer repelled.

Need of Foreign Capital.

CHAPTER XXX

CONCLUSION

EIGHTY years have elapsed since Belgium became by her own efforts in the first place, and with the support of England and France in the second, an independent, self-governing, and clearly-defined kingdom, occupying a position of transcendent importance for all concerned in the maintenance of the balance of power in Western Europe. For England in particular the preservation of the national integrity of the Netherlands is a vital necessity. Under no circumstances must Belgium and Holland be allowed to pass into the hands or under the control of Germany. Antwerp might be made a pistol directed at the heart of England, said Napoleon, and if this was true in the days of sailing ships it is incalculably more true in an age of steam, electricity and aeronautic achievement.

Modern Belgium.

In those eighty years Europe has greatly changed, but the general change is small compared to that in Belgium herself. The Belgium in which Leopold I was invited to rule was an undeveloped country possessing little capital and inhabited by a people rendered so cautious by long and bitter experience that they might be described as timid. It made its national debut under the protection of the two Western Powers, and a state of tutelage is not the one most calculated to develop heroic qualities in a people. But there were other perils to national progress from the agreement of the Five Great Powers (Italy not then having been born) to leave Belgium outside the range of their ambitions. The sense of being protected by the solemn pledge of Europe might have bred ease and laziness. The citizens of the new State might have been so rejoiced with the novelty of independence as to enjoy

A Great Change.

the present in oblivion of the future. They might have revelled in the long lost freedom without thinking of the duty and difficulty of preserving it. Foreign guarantees are transient, the only sure bulwark of the existence of a nation, great or small, is its own resolution backed up by careful and wise preparations for the evil day of peril during the long years of peace.

This reproach cannot be addressed to the Belgian people. They concentrated their attention on the development of their little country, and they laboured with set purpose and a single mind to place it in the van of European industrial and intellectual progress. At first the movement was slow—too slow some impetuous critics observed—and the attention and efforts of the people were concentrated at home. No foreign adventure would have tempted the generation which died out with the first king. The present of an El Dorado as a colony would have been rejected, although a few enlightened minds were beginning to realise that some day or other the country would need outlets for its rapidly-increasing population. But the development of Belgium came first. Not till its plains presented an unbroken expanse of cultivation, and its workshops and factories were working at full pressure did Belgians generally begin to think that some attention should be paid to expansion beyond the limits of their narrow borders.

National Progress.

By that time Belgium had accumulated no inconsiderable amount of capital. Her financial leaders took their place in the influential fraternity which controls the money markets of the world and which has been designated "*la haute finance.*" The national savings were invested with some losses but on the whole with great profits in South America, Russia and China (to mention only a few of Belgium's spheres of interest). The growth of capital led to closer relations with Paris, and Brussels has become almost an agency or branch of the

Increased Capital.

French metropolis in financial matters. It is sometimes said that French influence in Belgium has declined (and I for one am far from denying the truth of the assertion) but it is supreme in the circles of "*la haute finance.*"

The acquisition and accumulation of capital, the participation in important World affairs chiefly in combination with France and Russia, and finally the possession of a great colonial territory, which has apparently excited the envy of onlookers, all these have produced a change in Belgian character and ways of looking at things that is not generally allowed for. It is no longer safe or prudent to speak of the Belgian nation as timid, self-diffident, and afraid to accept responsibility. It would be nearer the truth to say that they have become a trifle venturesome, a little overbold, and not afraid to enter into competition with the great ones of the earth. Perhaps they have gone a little too far in this direction, but the Government that attempts to treat them *de haut en bas* will soon find itself thwarted in its designs by the aroused sense of dignity of the governing classes in modern Belgium. The worst consequence of the assumption that Belgium has stood still since the days of the London Conference is that there are always other Governments ready not merely to flatter, but also to promise support in the event of aggression. The confidence of the Belgian Foreign Office in itself is great enough, but it is rendered infinitely greater by the conviction that it does not lack friends, and the most serious consequence of all, resulting from miscalculation in political effort, and from wilful blindness to the magnificent progress of Belgium in all the essentials of prosperity and stability, is that it is driven to take its friends from the wrong quarters.

Greater Confidence.

With regard to the home politics of Belgium a foreign observer must be careful in expressing any sweeping opinion. Party passion runs undeniably high, and the gulf separating Catholic and Socialist is very wide and deep. At times revolution seems in the air, and with revolution would come

such a change in the condition of things in the country that it might lose its integrity and independence. But many Belgians who speak with full knowledge and authority warn outsiders from forming what may seem logical conclusions about the conflicts of Parties in their country. They admit that political feuds become bitter, that the partisans are noisy—it is admittedly a Belgian characteristic—and that sometimes violence seems imminent; but they add these Belgians know just when to stop. They will draw back when they see peril from their clamour and excess to the national existence. That assurance is worth bearing in mind, although it does not cover all the possibilities of the situation. It meets the case while the Catholic party remains in office, but it is not at all clear what would follow from the advent to power of a Liberal-Socialist ministry, and the majority now behind the party in power is very small.

Home Politics.

Looking beyond the question of party contests it is probably true that the precautions taken against a Socialist upheaval, with which the Legislative Chamber is periodically threatened, have been sufficient to assure the preservation of society, and no doubt the new army organisation will also contribute to the same result. But at the same time there is almost as much danger in the Catholic party retaining a monopoly of office as there is from the other side coming in. The Belgian system of electing representatives is one of the fairest that has been devised by human skill, but its merits are obscured by the indisputable result that it has given one side a long and unbroken lease of power. This fact alone weakens its claims to perfection and strengthens the demand for the change to the simple procedure of "one man one vote" or "universal suffrage." The abolition of the plural vote will be a serious blow to Conservatism, and its effects will only be mitigated by extending the suffrage to women whenever the change takes place. Even on the Catholic side of the

The Plural Vote.

Chamber the view is beginning to prevail that in the next political crisis, which is probably not far off, the plural vote in its present form will have to go.

Flemish Demands.

But to the outsider the recent developments in the Flemish movement seem more alarming as a menace to the stablilty of Belgium than the feuds of Catholic and Socialist deputies. So long as the Flemish demands were confined to redress of their own grievances, and to the establishment of their own position on a footing of equality with the Walloons there was no serious objection to be made, but all this was gained half a century ago and ratified by a second triumph twenty-five years later. The latest efforts of the Flemish party are offensive and not merely defensive. They are seemingly bent on a campaign of aggression into Walloon or quasi-Walloon territory, the reasons of which are still obscure. And this forward movement has raised a volume of irritation and indignation among the Walloons that would not be credited by anyone who had not seen a meeting of French-speaking Belgians discussing the latest Flemish demands.

The Bond of Language.

Whatever the advocates of minor races may say to the contrary language is the true connecting link of a realm, and the attempt to revive half or wholly dead languages, if they were ever anything better than dialects, becomes a menace to the State in proportion as the language in common use is weakly or strongly established. In Belgium there are the two languages which have hitherto been on a fairly equal footing so far as numbers were concerned. But the Flemings are increasing at a greater rate in numbers and prosperity than the Walloons, and the swing of the pendulum will be increasingly in their favour. They are now displaying an intention to make the most of this superiority and to show their adversary no quarter. It is not surprising that the Walloons are up in arms and are showing resentment. The champions of Flemish, which is only low German, and which in the course of a few

generations might be converted by a German Government into a very passable high German, have now embarked on an undertaking aiming apparently at absorbing the populous parts of Belgium hitherto included in Walloon Belgium, and if the plain brutal truth must be told their success seems far from impossible.

Views about France.

There is no doubt something more behind the Flemish movement than meets the eye. If it is only a party move to increase the Conservative forces in a country where the disruptive forces of Republicanism and Socialism are in active operation the stability of the kingdom may be rather increased than diminished by it. But it is possible that there is another and more sinister explanation. German statesmen have always carefully watched and taken the greatest interest in the Flemish movement. German influence has long been in the ascendant in Antwerp, and the sympathetic attitude of the Berlin Cabinet in the Congo controversy has not failed to make a considerable impression in bureaucratic circles in Brussels. Belgian ministers are probably not unaware that Prussia expects to be paid for services rendered and with interest; but as no demand has yet been made of this nature the grateful sense remains unalloyed. The Flemish movement is in its essence an anti-French movement, and if it succeeds in weakening French influence in Belgium it must to that extent promote and strengthen the interests and influence of Germany.

There are two reasons for the outburst of an anti-French feeling in Belgium. The first of these is the new religious laws, which amount to a persecution of the Church, and have made the French Government most unpopular among the true Catholics of Flanders. Nobody in this country or in France seems to realise the new sentiment of dislike for France and French ideas that has sprung up in Flanders within the last ten years. The dread of the spread of French influence was always a sort of bugbear in Flanders; it has

NAVE OF ANTWERP CATHEDRAL, FROM THE CHOIR

(By permission of the Ligue de Propagande)

now given place to aversion and, the word must be written, contempt.

If the religious question has moved the masses it is political considerations that sway the minds of those in power. There is a Republican Party in Belgium. It must exist and take itself seriously when M. Vandervelde shouts the fact in the presence of his King, but a Republic could only exist in Belgium as a kind of satellite of that of France. If Belgian Republicans look to France it is only natural that those Belgians who are not Republicans should look elsewhere, and that means to Germany. The situation has not yet become acute, but unless the feud between Flemings and Walloons can be arrested serious consequences threatening if not the very existence of, at least the present order of things in, Belgium must follow within no remote future.

Republicanism.

If there has been a deeper purpose in these pages than to describe a country and people among whom I have lived and for whom I have the highest admiration and regard, it is to do what may be done by individual effort towards drawing the attention of the British public to the affairs of Belgium with the view of increasing mutual sympathy. The national alliance between the peoples of Flanders and England is the oldest in Europe. There are no two people more alike. Their most cherished institutions, those of civic liberty, are the same. The English character has been leavened by considerable immigrations of Flemish settlers since the twelfth century. Clouds have arisen from time to time on the horizon of their relations, but they have cleared away. The truest of Belgian patriots, whether he be Walloon or Fleming, knows in his heart of hearts that England—apart from the efforts of himself and his fellow-countrymen—is the one sure bulwark of Belgium's independence. The appreciation of that great responsibility should on both sides of the Channel stifle criticism and promote regard.

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